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LES VICTOIRES SERBES EN 1914

(The Serbian Victories of 1914)

by

LIEUT. COL. DESMAZES, FRENCH ARMY

and

COMMANDANT NAUMOVITCH, SERBIAN ARMY

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

The following study of the Operations in Serbia from August to December 1914, first appeared serially in the "Revue Militaire Francaise" during 1928. It was later published in book form.

The book gives a detailed tactical account of the battles of the Tser and the Koloubara and a brief account of the Serbian invasion of Srem which occurred between these two operations. It also gives a brief outline of political and historical events leading up to the war. The strategical aspects of the operations are treated thruout the book and a conclusion at the end gives an analysis of the entire campaign.

This study should be of interest to all sections of the school. There are good examples of counterattack; marching capabilities of troops; regrouping of armies; the "offensive-defensive" type of battle to meet initial superiority of forces; the influence of supply on tactical operations and the difficulty of maintaining offensive action as distance from a base of supply is increased.

In the translation the term 1st (2d, 3d) "Ban" is used in designating divisions. This term indicates the relative degree of training and combat efficiency of a particular division. For example, a "1st Ban" division is composed of the youngest and best trained men.

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The Serbian Victories of 1914

Chapter I

I. Observations on Political History

Before beginning the account of the operations which comprise the object of this study, it seems indispensable to briefly outline the sequence of events which caused the Austro-Serbian conflict. Politics has so great an influence on strategy that we cannot speak of one without saying something about the other.

We know that the resurrection of the Serbian nation dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The "Treaty of Bucharest," concluded between Russia and Turkey, on the twenty-eighth of May, 1812, guaranteed, in Article VIII, that Serbia, which until then was a province under the rule of the Sultan, like the other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, should have the right of self-government. This concession, forced from the Turks by force of arms, was presented in the treaty as a "proof of the magnanimity of the Sultan."

This state of affairs was confirmed by an act appended to the "Convention of Ackerman," signed on the seventh of October, 1825, between Russia and Turkey, and by the "Treaty of Andrinople," (fourteenth of September, 1829) which terminated the Russo-Turkish War, commenced in April, 1828.

The respective relationship of sovereign and vassal between Turkey and Serbia was prolonged until the Russo-Turkish War of 1878, with one important modification. "The Treaty of Paris," thirtieth of March, 1856, which terminated the Crimean War, placed Serbia "under the collective protection of the contracting powers."

In brief, during the greater part of the nineteenth century, the bonds which bound a reviving Serbia to the Turkish Empire, which had reached the final stage of its decadence, were gradually loosened, until the Congress of Berlin, on the sixth of July, 1878, recognized, by Article 34, the independence of Serbia. It is also necessary to note the prominent role which Russia played in the progressive liberation of Serbia.

However, one essential fact gives events of 1914 their true value. As the yoke of Turkish oppression became lighter on Serbia, a new danger appeared and increased for her. This was Austria. This growing malevolence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for its little neighbor can be explained from a political viewpoint, and we shall briefly indicate its motives.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Austria held, north of the middle Danube and Sava, territory populated by Serbian race (Srem, Banat, Batchka, Baragna, Slavonie, Croatia). She viewed with displeasure the growth of a state on her border which offered a dangerous center of attraction to the Serbian subjects of the Empire.

This antagonism was exhibited in all its intensity in 1848, when a revolution which flared up in Vienna failed to destroy the Empire on the Danube. The Serbian subjects of Hungary attempted to take advantage of this event to obtain political and religious liberty. A revolt broke out. Vienna did not at first view this rebellion with as much disapproval as one might think it would. In fact, the revolting Serbians attacked the Hungarians who had themselves revolted against the Emperor. The latter appeared to make some concessions to the Serbians. Then, as soon as the Hungarians yielded, the Emperor, with the aid of a Russian army, revoked the concessions made to the Serbians, and the old regime continued. This revolt, which had cost the lives of nearly 100,000 Serbians, failed, because it lacked the vitality and ethnic unity of a nation which was extending its frontiers, since many of the Serbians came from the Principality.

Also, Austria never allowed an occasion to pass when it could suppress this disturbing neighbor. During the Crimean War, affecting the belief that its frontiers were threatened, it massed troops on the Sava and Danube, but did not dare to invade the Principality. The "Treaty of Paris," in 1856, putting Serbia henceforth under the protection of the contracting powers, obliged Austria to exercise more discretion. There was proof of this some years later. In 1862, following an incident between Turkish and Serbian soldiers on the streets of Belgrade, the governor of Belgrade bombarded the city with cannons from the citadel. War between Turkey and the Principality seemed imminent. When the guaranteeing powers intervened, Austria asked that they grant her the right to occupy Belgrade with her army, under the pretext of re-establishing peace. This request was denied by the powers, and Austria did not dare to go any further.

The Austro-Prussian War of 1866, marked the beginning of a new phase of Austrian hostility towards Serbia. In fact, victorious Prussia, not being able to realize the plan of reparations in yielding to Austria in Wallachia and Moldavia, pointed out at the time of the negotiations at Nickolsburg, the direction in which to extend its foreign policy. It was in the Balkans. Henceforth, Vienna aimed to dominate the peninsula, and by a master stroke of Bismarkian politics, was going to find in this new orientation a new ally in its hostility against Serbia, which barred to Austria the route to the Aegean Sea.

In 1875, there appeared for Slavs in general, and for Serbians in particular, a series of diplomatic errors and military defeats, from which Austria gained more than if she herself had won a brilliant victory.

In 1875, an insurrection of the Serbian population arose in Bosnia and Herzegovina, against the Turkish oppressor. This revolt reached its climax in July and August, when the insurgents formed a "General Committee of Liberation," which appealed for aid from Serbia and Montenegro. The Serbian government hesitated to respond

to this appeal. It decided to participate in the struggle only when it learned that Prince Peter Karageorgevitch had placed himself at the head of the insurgents. Hostilities commenced between Serbia and Turkey at the end of July, 1876. This was a disaster for the Serbian army, which was not prepared to undertake such a struggle alone against the military resources of the Ottoman Empire. The "Treaty of Constantinople," twenty-eighth of February, 1877, re-established the "status quo ante bellum." If Turkey showed herself to be conciliatory, it was because at this time she saw approaching the conflict which commenced in the following April, with Russia and Roumania. This fact alone shows what poor judgment the Serbian government used, by allowing its army to become powerless and then do nothing, in the strenuous campaign which Russia conducted in the Balkans. It is interesting to note that in the Turko-Serbian conflict of 1876, Vienna had forbidden the government of Belgrade to initiate any military operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, acting as if these two provinces already belonged to Austria.

In fact, it was this very fact that the government of Emperor Francis-Joseph intended.

There was actually happening then an event, which at the time was barely noticed. However, it was to have incalculable consequences.

Russia, anxious to re-establish its prestige in the East, which had been compromised by the Crimean War, took advantage of the good will exhibited by the newly formed German Empire, and assumed toward Turkey from 1876 on, a deliberately provocative attitude which should cause a conflict in a brief time. However, Russia feared intervention by Austria. By the intervention of Bismark, there was signed between the governments of St. Petersburg and Vienna, on the fifteenth of January, 1877, a convention which had been hastily drawn up at Reichstadt, on July eighth, of the preceding year. By this convention, Austria bound itself to remain neutral in the approaching war, on condition that Russia would renounce all territorial conquests on the right bank of the Danube. As compensation for all the other advantages which the last fact might not cover, she promised Austria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. This act entailed grave consequences. By this acquisition, Austria-Hungary was to be in a position to dominate the Balkans. Mistress of the major part of the territory of the Serbian race, she became involved in extending her advantages to their logical conclusion--the complete destruction of Serbia. The convention of Reichstadt, which, however, remained secret, was going to place Serbia, on account of the action of Russia, its natural protector, at the mercy of Austria. Russian diplomacy did not fail to perceive the enormous error which it had just committed. In 1882, Count Chouvaloff wrote, "The worst thing in the cession of territory (Bosnia and Herzegovina) is, in

my opinion, the fact that it threatens the future peace of Europe. It is the spark which will one day set fire to the powder."

We know that the Congress of Berlin, in 1878, while granting a certain extension of territory to Serbia, gave Austria "the administration" of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which nominally remained Turkish territory. For Serbia this was a revelation which plunged it into despair.

Thus the Serbian-Turkish War was paid for in disaster, and the Russo-Turkish conflict, which followed it, resulted, on account of the diplomatic errors of Russia and the skill of Bismark, who supported Austria, in a double deception for Russia and Serbia.

Now we arrive to recent events which are the logical sequence of those we have just outlined.

In the beginning of October, 1908, Austro-Hungarian ambassadors turned over to the heads of the states to which they were accredited, signed letters from the Emperor, Francis-Joseph, explaining the motives which determined the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Empire. This violation of an international treaty would have undoubtedly caused a general conflict, if Russia weakened by its Manchurian defeats had not been compelled to yield. Serbia, submissive to the council of her friends, made the best of it.

But from this time on, it was clear to those who knew Balkan questions, that the balance was definitely broken in this delicate part of Europe. There was proof of the fact, when Austria, after the Serbian victories in 1912-13, attempted, with only partial success, to rob Serbia of the fruits of victory. These victories which had surprised Germany and Austria, cut off Teutonic expansion to the Aegean Sea. In order to gain it, there now remained only resort to arms; and for this, either await an occasion or originate one.

The incident at Sarajevo, in June, 1914, afforded the occasion.

When, on the following month Austria declared war, we know from the preceding short account what her intentions were. It was acting to destroy Serbia, and in comparing this intention with the result, we can not help but think of the prophetic words of Albert Sorel which apply to the fall of Danubean Empire. These were, "Here is a century in which they are attempting to solve the Eastern problem. On the day when they believe it is solved, Europe will inevitably see the Austrian problem arise."

And upon the ruins of this Empire is reconstituted the national unity of the Serbians, Croatsians, and Slovenes, which disappeared in the fourteenth century after the death of Czar Douchan.

II. Plans and Forces of Opponents.

A. Austrian Army.

The Austro-Hungarian general staff had drawn up three plans of operations which corresponded to as many possible conflicts; with Russia, war plan "R" drawn up in the beginning of 1887; with Serbia, war plan "B" ("B" is the first letter of the word Balkan) drawn up at the beginning of 1897; with Italy, war plan "I" drawn up in 1899.

A fourth plan, considering the possibility of a simultaneous war with Russia and Serbia, had also been studied.

On the twenty-eighth of July, Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The mobilization order against Serbia and Montenegro had been issued at 9:23 P.M. on the twenty-fifth, according to Conrad. Whether the general staff at Vienna had thought that hostilities would be localized in the Balkans, or whether it desired, at any cost, to gain a degree of advantage by taking the initiative in operations against Serbia, without waiting for the end of the diplomatic discussions engaged in with St. Petersburg, it decreed "partial" mobilization of the forces destined to act against Serbia and Montenegro. The first day of the mobilization was fixed as July twenty-eighth. Plan "B" which went into effect, provided for the formation of a group of armies which represented two-fifths of the total of the armed forces. Placed on the twenty-sixth of July under the command of Archduke Frederick, this group of armies was organized in the following manner: (Sketch 1)

The Sixth Army, under orders of Field Marshall Potiorek, military governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina, composed of the XV and XVI corps, stationed in times of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was to be concentrated between Sarajevo and the frontier and also face toward Montenegro.

The Fifth Army, commanded by General of Infantry Liborius Ritter von Frank, was composed of two corps, VIII (Prague) and XIII (Agram). It was assembled on the lower Drina.

The Second Army, under the command of General of Cavalry, Von Boelm Ermoly, was likewise composed of two corps, IV (Budapest) and IX (Therezienstadt, Boheme du Nord), the tenth Cavalry Division, the twentieth and twenty-third Hungarian Divisions. It was concentrated between Semlin and Peterwardein (Petrovaradin).

A detachment composed of the VII corps, the first Cavalry division, and the third Hungarian Cavalry division was stationed in Banat along the Danube.

In addition the III corps (Graz) was to temporarily remain in position, prepared to be transported to the theater of operations in the Balkans.

There was a total, with army troops and service elements, of 412,000 men.

For this concentration, the railroad lines had been divided into four groups. (Sketch 2)

- Group I - B, reserved for the Fifth Army
- Group II - B, reserved for the Second Army
- Group III - B, reserved for the detachment
- Group IV - B (or line IX) for the transport of units stationed in peace time in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, which were composed principally of isolated battalions taken from the regiment in the interior.

But, in the meantime, the order for general mobilization had been given on the thirty-first of July, and the first day of the mobilization was the fourth of August. In consequence, concentration "R" commenced seven days later than concentration "B". From this fact, arose a series of complications which the Austro-Hungarians had not anticipated.

We have already stated that a plan had been drawn up, based on a simultaneous war with "Russia and Serbia. In this case, the plan did not provide for sending to the Balkan theater of operations two-fifths of the armed forces, but for sending a smaller force, designated "Minimum Group." This force was composed only of the XIII, XV, and XVI corps, and some independent divisions and brigades. The "Minimum Group" had an effective total of 190,000 men. The principal part of the Austro-Hungarian army (three-fifths) destined to act against Russia in any circumstances, and which constituted Echelon "A" was to be followed by Echelon "B" composed of the IV, VII, VIII, and IX corps, withdrawn from the "Minimum Group" of the Balkans. Echelon "B" represented the difference between the "Maximum Group" and the "Minimum Group" (412,000--190,000) or 222,000 men. But when the concentration against Russia commenced, the concentration against Serbia had been in

full operation for seven days. Echelon "B", destined for the Russian front, was partly in action and partly in movement towards the Balkans.

The Austro-Hungarian command found itself on the night of July thirty-first and August first, confronted with the following dilemma--either to suspend the concentration against Serbia and move toward the north by all available lines, with Echelon "B", or allow this echelon to continue its movement toward the south, and direct it toward the north only after the total passage of Echelon "A." A telegram from Kaiser Wilhelm to Emperor Francis-Joseph asked that Austria concentrate its entire forces against Russia while the German army attacked France. This completed the plunge of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff into complete perplexity.

The chief of staff, General Conrad von Hoetzendorf, then turned to the chief of the railway service and asked him the following question: Would it be possible to suspend concentration "B" which is in the process of execution, and move all the forces which are directed towards the Serbian front against Russia? To this question the chief of rail service replied that the problem thus presented was technically impossible of solution, and that if the concentration in the Balkan theater was interrupted, it would result in a "catastrophic confusion."

As a result, Conrad decided to allow concentration "B" to continue.

But when battle had been carried on with Serbia until the twelfth of August, Conrad endeavored to place back on the Russian front either Echelon "B" or its equivalent, and commenced to withdraw elements from the group of armies in the Balkans and move them successively towards Galicia. Following is a list of these withdrawals, with the date of relief on the Serbian front:

General Boehm Ermoly, with part of his staff, on the seventeenth of August.

The 20th Hungarian division, withdrawn from the Second army, between the 20th and 26th of August.

The VII Corps withdrew from the Detachment between the 22nd of August and 2nd of September.

The 23rd Hungarian Division, withdrawn from the Second army, between the 17th and 25th of August.

Some parts of the IX Corps, withdrawn from the Second army, between the 29th of August and 9th of September.

The VIII Corps, withdrawn from the Fifth army, between the 22nd of August and 2nd of September.

As we can see, all these elements, with the exception of the last (VII Corps) had been withdrawn from the Northern front. But this decision was to have a considerable influence on the issue of the operations engaged in against the Serbians.

The plan of operation of the group of armies in the Balkans reveals its scheme of maneuver by a single glance at the map. (Sketch I)

The concentration of forces was effected on both sides of the Ratcha Salient (confluence of the Drina and Sava). Moving from this base at right angles, the Second and Fifth armies marched concentrically on Valievo. In the meantime, the Sixth army, leaving a minimum of troops in front of the Montenegrins, had taken the offensive in the direction of Oujitse. On the extreme left of this formation, the detachment crossed the Danube, and in conjunction with the left of the Second army, caused the fall of the defenses of Belgrade.

Once having gained the front, Belgrade, Valievo, Oujitse, "the blow against the heart of Serbia will have been made." (Conrad)

Thus the allotment of Austro-Hungarian forces opposite Serbian frontiers was in harmony with a clearly expressed offensive idea.

If we enter more into the details of the operations conceived by the Austrian command, we can see that it was planned in the following sequence:

The Fifth army was to cross the lower Drina on the front Losnitsa-Liechnitsa and march on Valievo, taking the valley of Iadar as an axis of advance.

The Second army was to cross the Sava in the vicinity of Chabats and march on Valievo, while operating on the flank and rear of the Serbian troops opposing the advance of the Fifth army.

Finally, the Sixth army, conforming to the movement of the Fifth army would, in its turn, cross the Drina.

The XV Corps at Vichegarde and Baillina-Bachta would advance toward Oujitse when the Fifth army had captured Valievo.

The XVI Corps at Fotscha and Medjedie would move in the direction of Plyevlia.

This plan of operation calls for some consideration.

First of all, if we consider it in the category of the entire strategical problem which the Supreme Austro-Hungarian Command had to solve, one may ask if it is logical to launch an offensive against Serbia, calling for more than 400,000 men, at the time when Austro-Hungary might have to face a war against Russia, with the possibility of a weak German army in East Prussia.

We have just seen that this decision was hardly taken before the danger in it appeared to General Conrad. . And the solution which he adopted consisted of moving the Second army from the bank of the Sava to the Principal Theater of Operations.

Then it is necessary to realize the delicate position of General von Boehm Ermoly, Commander of the Second army, who had his forces entirely assembled to depart on the 11th of August for the northern frontier of Serbia and did not dare to become seriously engaged, knowing that he was to depart in a short time for Galicia. So that, of the jaws that were opening to crush Serbia, one was paralyzed before it could close.

In order to remedy this complication, General Potiorek, on the 6th of August was placed, while still maintaining command of the Sixth army, at the head of a new Balkan group composed of the following:

(1) The Sixth Army

The XV Corps:-1st Division of Infantry
7th and 9th Mountain Brigades.
48th Division-10th and 12th Mountain Brigades.

The XVI Corp:-2nd Mountain Brigade
8th Mountain Brigade
1st and 13th Mountain Brigades.
18th Division of Infantry
(4th, 5th, and 6th Mountain Brigades)
40th Hungarian Division

(2) The Second Army

VIII Corps:--9th Division of Infantry
21st landwehr division

XIII Corps:--36th Division of Infantry
42nd landwehr division.

(3) The following
Detachments in Syrmie:

Half of the 7th Division, 1st and 3rd battalions of the 6th regiment of fortress artillery. The garrison holding Peterwardein, the Danube flotilla, and the 107th landstrum battalion at Banat.

This enumeration seems to prove that the new commander of the Balkan group no longer had the power to take offensive action with the Second army, reduced to assist the hopeless struggle which was to take place south of the Sava.

It seems probable, however, that the Second army, whose successive dates of departures we have indicated, was forced to engage part of its forces south of Chabats, especially when the battle of Tser took such a disastrous turn for the Fifth army.

Be that as it may, if Potiorek saw his means diminish, his task remained the same. He had at his disposal only 250,000 men to oppose 275,000 Serbians. At first sight, this appears to be an offensive which was undertaken under unfavorable auspices.

And what aggravated the situation of the Austro-Hungarian forces still more, was the manner in which they had prepared for this offensive. In effect, referring back to the plan, the essential features of which we have outlined, we see that the simple and logical idea of concentration which is its essence is nullified in its application by a dispersion of efforts in time and space.

First, let us consider time. The Sixth army was to march on Oujitse only when the Fifth army captured Valievo. What if the Fifth army did not attain its objective? In reading the account which follows we shall see that we are justified in asking this question.

Next, consider space. We must admit the entry of the Fifth army into Valievo would facilitate the advance of the XV Corps, on the left of the Sixth Army, toward Oujitse. But while this XV Corps would thus open up the valley of the Morava, which extends from west to east, the XVI Corps on the right of the Sixth army would have to take Plyevlia for

its objective which would take it along the valley of the Lim, which followed a north-south direction.

B. The Serbian Army

During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, commencing at the time that Austro-Hungary had seized the Serbian provinces of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and especially since 1908, after the annexation of these provinces to the Empire, the Serbian General Staff had studied and prepared the defense of the Kingdom for an attack which they could no longer doubt. A large number of staff reconnaissances were made on this hypothesis, and also two grand maneuvers which were held in the region bordering the Austro-Hungarian frontier.

This intellectual preparation was at its peak when the conflict broke out.

But, from the point of view of organization and equipment, the Serbian army was, at the instant when Austria declared war, in an especially difficult situation.

The increase in territory resulting from the Treaty of Bucharest, on the 25th of August, 1913, had forced a military re-organization. In accordance with the plan adopted, the army, which was composed of five active divisions at this time, was hereafter, on account of the increase in the recruiting strength of new Serbia, to be composed of ten divisions. A large part of the regiments and some active skeleton organizations had been, as a consequence, located after the demobilization, in the recently acquired territory, where they commenced the new organization. Due to this fact old Serbia was nearly devoid of troops when the war broke out. We can conceive what trouble such a situation would cause in the mobilization, when we understand that each active division was, with the resources of the territory to which assigned, to organize a second division, which in turn to form a third.

In addition, the Serbian army, impoverished in material by a war from which it had hardly emerged, experienced great difficulty in supplying armament to forces which the resources in man-power would have permitted it to double.

This situation had certainly not escaped the attention of the Austrian General Staff, and we find in the desire to settle the Serbian question, before the military re-organization of this country was finished, one of the causes which determined Austria to make war.

Under these conditions, the Serbian mobilization was neither as rapid nor as orderly as could be desired. But the patriotism of the Serbian nation supplemented in every way possible the preparation which had not been made and the mobilization was completed in a relatively short time.

Under the hypothesis of a war against Austria, the problems which confronted the Serbian General Staff could be classified under the following headings:

First of all, the rail net of Austro-Hungary presented, north of the obstacle of the Danube-Sava, a density which revealed (outside of any other indication) the intention of the enemy to make his main effort on this front on both sides of Belgrade, from Obrenovats to Pojarevats, and take as a first objective the line, Gorgny, Milanovats, Kragovievats, Bagrdan, Veliki, Popovitch. It was logical to expect the following plan by the Austrians: To capture Belgrade in the first drive; then move over easy terrain where the material superiority of the Austrians could be utilized, and to move up the valleys of the Morava and the Koloubara, which led to the heart of the country, and in particular to seize Kragovievats, the arsenal of Serbia, which largely motivated the Austrian offensive.

We know that special circumstances caused the Austrian Command to give up the offensive which it desired to take on this front with the Second army, and that in the end the attack was made on the western front, which proves that strategy sometimes fails even when preparations for action against an enemy is logically made.

On the other hand the problem was varied, depending on whether Serbia was opposed to Austria alone, or had the help of Russia.

These essential elements caused General Radomir Poutnik and his assistant, Colonel Zivoin Mitchitch, who had the double honor of drawing up the plan of operation and applying it, to maintain a strategical attitude at the beginning of the conflict.

The Serbian forces were assembled in the area which the Serbian General Staff, as we stated before, considered the enemy desired above all others. The base of operations was established on the line Stari-Adjbegovats-Palanka-Topola-Arandjelovats-Darossava-Lazarevats.

The concentration of the army was to be covered in the direction of the principal attack by the obstacles of the Danube and the Sava, which were observed and defended by mixed detachments.

While considering the northern frontier of the kingdom as the one most immediately threatened, General Poutnik admitted that the Austrians would be able to conduct some secondary operations as follows:

On the one hand, on the two faces of the Ratscha salient from Zvornik, on the Drina, to the South and from Obrenovats, on the Sava to the east of the Salient.

On the other hand, on the front, Baillain-Batcha-Mokra-Gora, which by way of Oujitse gave access to the narrow valley of the Morava from the west.

The Serbian armies were, as a result, divided in the following manner:

Commander-in-Chief, Prince Alexander,
heir apparent.

Chief of Staff, General Poutnik

First Army--Commander, General Petar
Boiovitch

Timok Division--1st Ban composed of 16
Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 9 batteries of
755, located in the vicinity of Palanka.

Timok Division--2nd Ban composed of 12
Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 6 batteries, and
located near Ratscha.

Morava Division--2nd Ban composed of 12
Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 6 Batteries, and
located at Topola.

Branitchievo Detachment, formed from the
Danube--2nd Ban division and some troops
of the 3rd Ban, of 20 Battalions, 3 Squad-
rons, 6 rapid-fire Batteries, and 3½ Bat-
teries from Bange, and located on the front
Dombrovitsa, Rame, Goloubats, Posarevats.

Cavalry Division--composed of 16 Squadrons,
4 Batteries, 1 Infantry regiment of 4 Bat-
talions, located on the front Grotska, Sme-
derevo, Lipe, Ossipaonitsa.

Army Artillery consisting of 6 cannons of
120 L, and group of 3 Batteries of 120 C.
T. R.

This army composed of three divisions of the 2nd Ban, one division of the 1st Ban, and one Cavalry division, had essentially a defensive mission. It was charged with the surveillance and defense of the Danube in front of Belgrade on a front of about 100 kilometers. Its mass, one division of the 1st Ban, and two of the 2nd Ban, totalling forty battalions, was covered by the cavalry division, (Sixteen Squadrons and four battalions) and by the Branitchievo Detachment, (twenty battalions of the 2nd and 3rd Bans.)

Second Army:

Commander: General Stephan Stepanovitch

Morava Division:--1st Ban, composed of 16 Battalions, 1 Squadron, 6 Batteries of 15 S was located at Arandjelovats.

Composite Division:--1st Ban, composed of 16 Battalions, 1 Squadron, 3 Batteries of 75 S, and 2 Batteries of 120 C, was located at Darossava.

Choumadia Division:--1st Ban, composed of 16 Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 5 Batteries of 75 S and 1 Battery of 120 C, was located at Lazarevats.

Danube Division:--1st Ban, reinforced composed of 20 Battalions, 1 Squadron, 12 Batteries of 75 S, 1 Battery of 120 C, and 2 Batteries of 90 S, was located in the vicinity of Belgrade.

Army Artillery: 1 Battery (six guns) of 120 L, 1 Battery (six guns) of 120 C, 1 Battery (six guns) of 120 mortars.

This army, composed only of regular troops, was essentially an army of maneuver and shock action. The mass, three divisions of forty-eight battalions, was covered by the Danube division--1st Ban (twenty battalions) charged with defending the Belgrade area.

In addition all divisional cavalry had been assembled into army cavalry and constituted a detachment charged with maintaining liaison between the Danube Division--1st Ban and the Obrenovats Detachment (Third Army) of which more will be said later on.

Third Army:

Commander: General Pavle Jourichitch-Sturm.

Drina Division:--1st Ban composed of 16 Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 9 Batteries of 75 S, was located at Valievo.

Drina Division:--2nd Ban, composed of 16 Battalions, 2 Squadrons, 2 Batteries of 75 S, 3 Batteries, was divided into two equal detachments, as follows:

Chabats Detachment, composed of 8 Battalions, 1 Squadron, 1 Battery of 75 S, and 1 Battery--Bange.

Losnitsa Detachment, composed of 6 Battalions, 1 squadron, 1 battery of 75 S and 2 batteries of Bange.

Obrenovats Detachment, composed of 6 Battalions of the 1st and 3rd Ban, 1 Squadron, 1 Battery of 75 S, and 1 Battery of Bange.

Liubovia Detachment, composed of 1 group (3 Batteries) of 120 C. T. R., 3 Mountain Batteries, and 1 Battery (4 guns) of 120 L.

This army was charged with the defense of the Ratscha salient, Liubovia, in the Drina, and Obrenovats on the Sava.

Four detachments located respectively at Liubovia, Losnitsa, Chabats, and Obrenovats, representing in all a total of twenty-four battalions, and eight batteries, of the 2nd and 3rd Ban, and three Squadrons, insured the covering of this front which extended over one hundred kilometers, while the Drina Division--1st Ban, with the army artillery constituted a mass of maneuver in a central position at Valievo.

Oujitse Army:

Commander:--General Miloche Bojanovitch

Choumadia Division:--2nd Ban, composed of 16 Battalions, 2 Squadrons, 3 mountain batteries, and 3 mountain Bange Batteries, was located at Oujitse.

Oujitse Brigade, composed of 1 regiment of 4 Battalions of the 1st Ban, and 1 regiment of 4 Battalions of the 2nd Ban, and 2 Batteries Bange, was watching the frontier from Rogatchitsa to Baillina-Bachta.

Lime Detachment:--composed of $6\frac{1}{2}$ Battalions, and 1 mountain battery, was located at Priboi. It had taken the offensive on the 7th of August and had gained some localities beyond the frontier.

Army artillery, composed of 1 group of mountain T. R., 1 group of mountain Bange, and 1 group of field Bange artillery.

This army had the mission of covering the narrow valley of the Moravo from the west. The mass of this army was formed by a division of the 2nd Ban with the army artillery and located at Oujitse. Two mixed detachments, each of the strength of one brigade, covered the assembling of this mass. The Lime Detachment in the vicinity of Priepolie-Priboi was, in addition, charged with maintaining liaison with the moutenegrin troops.

As we can see, this arrangement of forces corresponded exactly to the intentions of the Serbian Commander and to his estimate of the maneuver to be undertaken by his adversary.

Moreover, if, for the reasons we have just stated, he had prepared especially for an Austrian offensive, debouching on the northern front, he had also taken precautions for his western front.

It is also necessary to note that our allies had a large formed mass of maneuver, consisting of eight divisions in addition to the eleven, which constituted the total Serbian army. This mass of maneuver was formed, for the most part, of regular divisions, while the covering mission was executed almost wholly by reserve troops. This employment of active troops and reserve troops was perfectly justified under the circumstances.

In fact, the Serbian army had limited forces. Its means of transport were still more limited. They assembled therefore, for maneuver and for shock action, the best organized and best trained troops. Of these they demanded considerable effort in the way of marching. The troops of the 2nd and 3rd Ban were to hold in place, in order to give the mass time to hasten forward. This conception, which is the opposite of that which was being practiced at the same time in France and Germany, where the covering forces were constituted from active and well trained troops, appears to have given the Serbian command entire satisfaction, in the sense that it permitted it to obtain some forces on which it could count for giving maximum results.

One should note the very weak proportion of artillery which the Serbians had at their disposal at the beginning of this campaign. We have stated the reasons for this shortage in material. By transferring the struggle into a mountainous and wooded region, where the Serbian Infantry was able, more easily than in the open, to protect itself from the superiority of enemy artillery, the Austrian command rendered our allies an invaluable but involuntary service.

Since the first of August, one of the unknown factors with which Serbia had been faced had disappeared. Russia had accepted the challenge and declared war on Austria.

As a consequence, the Serbian Command was immediately burdened with the task of fixing the maximum of Austrian forces in order to facilitate the work of the armies of Grand Duke Nicholas.

The Serbian army remained, for the time being, in a position in readiness in the positions that had been assigned them, prepared to meet the inevitable offensive of the enemy. But at the first favorable occasion it would pass, in its own turn, to the offensive in Srem (Syrmie) or Bosnia.

With this object, the directive of Serbian G. H. Q. on the 9th of August ordered the commander of the Second Army, which was the army of maneuver, to reconnoiter, without delay, the front of the Sava between Obrenovats and Debritz and to be prepared to cross this river at a moment's notice.

Chapter II

The First Serbian Victory Tser and Iadar 15-23 August, 1914

1. Descriptive Summary of the Terrain

The northwest part of the kingdom of Serbia which was to serve as the theater of the first phase of the struggle presented varied characteristics.

On both sides of the valley of the Iadar which affords a direct route to Valievo, the terrain is mountainous. But while to the south of the river the orographic system is varied, to the north of the Tser and its spur Iverak forms a hill mass whose crest, for a distance of about twenty kilometers, extends from southeast to northwest. This crest, steep, straight, and wooded, reaches a height of about 700 meters in its eastern part. The south side of this mountain, which is steeper than the north side, is composed of a series of parallel ridges which dominate the little valley of the Lechnitsa. The north slope stretches out in gentle undulations which finally end in the plain of Matchva. This entire mountainous zone is covered with cultivated fields and woods which limit observation. Roads are few and the centers of communication (Kroupagne, Petzka, and Zavlaka) play, as would be expected in such a case, an important part.

In the angle formed by the lower branch of the Drina and the Sava from Ratchka to Chabats, there extends a plain covered with villages and cultivated fields. This is Matchva. This plain forms a vast slope to the base of Tser. The streams of Dobritch, Doumatcha, and Dobrova, whose middle and lower parts are rather deep have valleys with muddy banks which can only be crossed by bridges.

The Drina, which forms the western boundary of Serbia, is one of the swiftest rivers in the region. Its channel is 100 to 150 meters wide, but numerous small wooded islands divide the obstacle and facilitates its passage.

As to the Sava, which constitutes a continuous moat circling the plain of Matchva to the north and east, it is an important river which, in places, is several hundred meters in width and will allow the flotilla of Austrian monitors to take part in the battle.

2. The preliminaries of the battle. Beginning of the Austrian offensive and organization of the Serbian Army on the Western Front.

Until the 11th of August the Austrians limited themselves to a series of artillery actions and small engagements of infantry upon different points on the north and west fronts in order to feel out the Serbians, distract their attention and reconnoiter different avenues of approach. Each time our allies appeared, without great trouble, to stop these attempts and feints.

Meanwhile, General Franck, Commander of the Fifth Army prepared his offensive, which, we have seen, was to open the way for the Sixth Army.

The movement of the Fifth Army was to commence at daylight of the 12th, and was to be executed in the following manner:

The VIII Corps was to cross the Drina north of Iagna, and move rapidly upon the heights to the east of Liechnitz (Tser) in order to assist the advance of the XIII corps which was to attack Losnitsa.

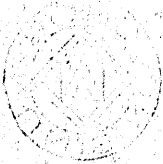
To the right of the main force, the 42nd Hungarian division advancing on both banks of the Drina toward Liubovia would assist the action of the Sixth Army, while threatening the left flank of the Serbian forces which were opposed to the movement of the VIII and XIII corps.

Finally, on the left, a detachment sent out from the VIII corps was to maintain liaison around the north slope of the Tser with the Second Army which was to debouch on Matchva upon the front--Chabats, Mitrovista. This detachment was, at the same time, to outflank any opposition offered by the enemy on the Tser.

General Franck estimated he would find upon the front Losnitsa-Liechnista, during the crossing of his army to the heights of Tekeriche, the equivalent of one-half of a Serbian Division. This was not far from correct. He concluded that his overwhelming numerical superiority would assure a rapid advance towards his objective, but his aspirations were soon to be baffled.

With the facts that we have just indicated the operation commenced on the morning of the 12th.

The VIII Corps had selected for its point of crossing the island of Samourovitch. The resistance of several Serbian detachments of the 3rd Ban, reinforced by volunteers, was so strong and so tenacious that by evening only the Austrian advance guard had gained a foot hold on the right bank.



The crossing of the XIII Corps at the island of Kouriatchitsa was also difficult and only the 36th Division was able to achieve the crossing of the river by the end of the first day. The Serbian detachment at Losnitsa, unable on account of the weakness of its effectives, and the extent of its sector to drive back the enemy upon the left bank, fell back upon a previously prepared position, staked out along the villages of Losnitsa, Lipnitsa, Gorgni, Dobritch, which barred the entrance to the valley of the Iadar.

During this time the Second Austrian Army forced the crossing of the Sava at Mitrovitsa with the 29th Division, and at Chabats with the 31st. The commander of the Serbian detachment at Chabats, in view of the enormous superiority of the enemy, withdrew to the south of the town in order to hinder them from moving out of it.

At Serbian G H Q the first information to arrive caused them to think that the Austrians were going to undertake a serious operation upon the northwest front, which on account of its projecting shape constituted a tempting objective. The decision was immediately made to concentrate the mass of the Serbian forces more to the west in order to place them near the threatened front without losing sight of the northern front which the Serbian General Staff still considered the principal one.

To put this idea into effect the following orders were immediately issued:-

The mass of the Second Army (Three Divisions) will fall back on the line Chabats--Obrenovats, maintaining one division at Oube in a central position.

The mass of the First Army (Three Divisions) will move into the area Lazarevats-Arandjelots, previously occupied by the Second Army.

The Danube Division, 1st Ban charged with a covering mission, in the vicinity of Belgrade will continue to belong to the Second Army, which is thus charged with the defense of the northern frontier from Chabats to the capital inclusive.

The Cavalry division will turn over the sector to the Branitchevo detachment and moving to Valievo is placed at the disposition of the Third Army.

Finally, the Branitchevo detachment, too far away, henceforth to be attached to the First Army, which is going to move towards the west, will act directly under G H Q.

These orders were scarcely given before the details of the crossing of the Drina and the Sava by the enemy reached the Serbian commander-in-chief, Prince Alexander, who very correctly concluded that the Austrians were threatening, by a converging movement the region around Valievo. Nevertheless, the situation was not sufficiently clear yet, so that the counter-offensive which the Serbian commander was planning could be definitely decided upon. Especially obscure were the intentions of the enemy on the northern frontier and on the sector held by the Army of Oujitse. The Serbian armies received, in consequence, instructions which required them to execute dual missions, to reinforce the covering forces upon the threatened fronts in order to contain the enemy and force him to disclose his mass; to assemble reserves in the probable zone of action, disposed in such depth as to preserve their freedom of maneuver. (Sketch No. 3)

The Third Army will detach from its reserve (Drina Division, 1st Ban) two strong detachments, each consisting of a regiment of infantry and a battalion of 75 S, which will reinforce, respectively, the covering forces engaged with the enemy at Lonista and Chabats.

The Second Army will immediately move its leading division (Choumadia, 1st Ban) on Chabats with the mission of reinforcing the covering force there and driving back, if possible, the enemy already over the Sava. The two other divisions of the army will remain for the time being at Oube prepared to strike in the flank any enemy forces which would debauch on the front Chabats-Obrenovats toward Valievo. The cavalry division is attached to the Second Army which turns over the Danube Division, 1st Ban to the First Army.

The First Army will execute the concentration which has been prescribed for it in the region Lazarevats-Aranjelovats.

Finally, with the object of fixing the maximum enemy forces upon the southwest front, the Third Army will initiate, without delay, a vigorous offensive in the direction of Vichegrade.

Briefly, these movements were planned with the object of changing the location of the mass of the Serbian Armies to face to the west instead of facing the north as they had up to this time. They were to be executed on the night of the 12th-13th, and during the day of the 13th. On that evening units of the Second Army were located as follows:-

The Coumadia Division, 1st Ban, at Veliki-Bosniak

The Combined Division, 1st Ban, at Banjani.

The Second Army had one division (Morava, 2nd Ban) at Lazarevats, and two divisions (Timok, 1st Ban and Timok, 2nd Ban) around Arandjelovats. During the day of the 13th the situation was noticeably changed at the front.

The XIII Austrian Corps completed the crossing. It assembled to the west of the direct railroad which leads from Lonitsa to Chabats in front of the Serbian position which extended from Rounjani to Gorgni-Dobritch. Although he disposed four brigades (36th Division, 11th and 13th mountain brigades) in front of the detachment at Losnitsa reinforced, as we have seen, by a regiment and a detachment of artillery, the Commander of the XIII Austrian Corps estimated that his attack would succeed only, on the condition that the VIII Corps on his left first seized Mount Vidoievitza. But the VIII Corps, harassed by Comitadjis, made only a slight advance during the day. It merely succeeded in seizing Vovo-Selo being drawn in to the north of the wooded heights which had been given to it as an objective.

However, the situation of the Third Serbian Army was critical. In fact, while it was threatened on its front by superior forces, the 42nd Hungarian Division had crossed the Drina south of Zvornik and its advance elements had arrived at the foot of Borogna. In this region, the Serbians had only the weak detachment of Liubovia, (two battalions of the 3rd Ban and one battery of Bange). The Commander of the Third Army was forced to move his reserve (Drina division, 1st Ban) from Valievo to Namenitsa.

Upon the northern front the Austrians captured Chabats. They constructed a bridge to assure the crossing of the mass of the IV Corps, but did not attempt to gain maneuver space. Opposite them the Commander of the Serbian covering detachment, in spite of the reinforcement received from his army, was satisfied to guard the exits of the city and organize for defense.

Thus, forty-eight hours after the beginning of his offensive, the enemy had only gained, beyond the obstacles of the Sava and the Drina, limited bridgeheads, in spite of the fact that he had initiative of action and very great numerical superiority.

On the morning of the 14th of August, the Fifth Austrian Army decided to launch a vigorous offensive which should, at last, assure its advance beyond the Drina.

On the left the VIII Corps attacked, at 4:30 A.M., Mount Vidoievitsa and the town of Liechnitsa. The Serbians first defended strongly in the town and then upon the heights which dominated it from the east. The numerical superiority of the enemy forced them to retire to the line held by the troops on their left who blocked the entrance to the Iadar Valley. At the end of the day the VIII Corps stopped on a line marked on the right by Mount Vidoievitsa and on the left by the Village of Prgnavor. The XIII Corps attacked the position at Losnitsa, but by afternoon, only the 36th Division and the 11th Mountain Brigade, supported by the 13th Brigade, were engaged with eight battalions, supported by twenty-four pieces of artillery. The Austrians attacked the position after a heavy artillery preparation. Dobritch, which was given up by the Serbians, was regained by a counter-attack and the 16th Austrian Infantry was nearly annihilated in this action. But the Commander of the Drina Division, 1st Ban, who had taken charge of the action in the Iadar Valley, took advantage of darkness to break off the fight and withdraw his brave troops about ten kilometers to the rear upon the position at Iarebitse, where the remainder of the division (two regiments of infantry and a detachment) was due to arrive on the morning of the 15th of August. This decision was fully justified. By prolonging an unequal struggle, the Serbian covering force risked putting itself out of action without benefit to the decisive struggle. It was worth more to survive at the price of abandoning a piece of terrain without essential value, while forcing the enemy to regain contact on a new position. With a methodical and prudent adversary, it was not imprudent to think that such a maneuver would gain appreciable time. On the other hand, the presence of the 42nd Hungarian division near Lioubovia constituted a serious threat to the left of the Serbian army, especially if the latter lingered in the valley of the Drina. By taking up a defensive position on Iarebitse the danger was not eliminated but it was lessened.

Near Chabats, on this same day, the 14th, the Serbians had retaken the initiative.

During the morning, the local Serbian command checked the advance of the enemy and was preparing to attack, when towards noon the head of the Choumadia, 1st Ban arrived. Its commander organized, without delay, a coordinated action with the object of driving back the Austrians already over the Sava. The division deployed and started to attack. But

reaching a point about 200 meters from the edge of the town, a little before nightfall, the Serbian infantry ran into a well organized system of defensive fires. The Austrian artillery installed upon the heights on the north bank of the river covered the attacker with shells, in conjunction with the Danube flotilla which brought its fire to bear from below the bridge.

The Commander of the Choumadia Division decided to postpone his attack to the following day. This attack would not have advanced far in any event, because the Serbian G H Q, disturbed by the division from the Austrian forces (29th Division) moving from north to south across the plain, sent an order to take up the defensive, for the time being, in this sector.

During the day the Serbian headquarters received information which indicated important forces were in the region of Chabats and that repeated attempts had been made on different points of the northern frontier, notably at the island of Tsigania, near Belgrade. On account of this they hesitated to increase the concentration of forces to the west. While charging the Third Army to continue its action on the western front, they decided to move the mass of the Second Army to the south of Chabats where it would be in a position to operate against the Austrian forces which had crossed the Sava. They ordered the 1st Army to assemble in the vicinity of Valievo while leaving a division at Oube.

But, during the night of the 14th-15th, the reports which arrived at G H Q on the action of the preceding day led the Commander-in-Chief to conclude:

(1) That the mass of the enemy forces were located upon the north-west front and that his main effort would be made in the direction Losnitsa-Valievo and that a secondary effort would be made in the direction Chabats-Valievo.

(2) That on the northern front the hostile actions were only unimportant demonstrations.

(3) Finally, that the lack of activity shown by the enemy in the south-west (Sixth Army) could be attributed either to his numerical weakness or to his lack of preparation. Either one of these theories allowed that part of the theater of operations be considered of secondary importance for the present.

Upon these deductions the following plan of maneuver was decided upon:-

The Third Army will continue to carry on the action on its front, its main mission being the denial of the Iadar Valley to the enemy.

In the Second Army, the Combined 1st Ban Division and the Morava 1st Ban Division, which are moving toward the west, will constitute the mass of maneuver. They will continue to move by forced marches on Tekeriche in order to attack the left flank of the enemy army which is moving in the valley of the Iadar. The Choumadia-1st Ban Division, which, we have seen, arrived at Chabats will contrive its mission, if possible drive the enemy beyond the Sava, at least to prohibit him from debauching from Chabats to the south. The cavalry division will operate in the plain of Matchva. It will maintain liaison between Choumadia-1st Ban and the group Morava-1st Ban and the Combined-1st Ban. Finally, it will operate against the flank and rear of the enemy mass debauching over the Drina.

The First Army will complete the movements, which were prescribed for it on the preceding day.

Finally, the Army of Oujitse and the detachment of Branitichevo will continue their respective missions, the former guarding the Danube front, and the latter endeavoring by an offensive toward Vichegarde to draw some of the enemy forces toward them and to fix them.

For his part, General Franck, Commander of the Fifth Austrian Army, having all his forces upon the right bank of the river, intended to attack, on the 15th, the front, Kroupagne-Zavlaka-Tekeriche. The orders which he issued on the evening of the 14th for the next day prescribed:-

The XIII Corps to seize the first two of these localities.

The VIII Corps to direct its efforts on the third.

The 15th was going to be the last during which the Fifth Army would have only outpast actions with the Serbian covering force which, under the orders of the Commander of the Third Army, held the sector on the lower Drina.

We have seen that, during the night of the 14th the Commander of Drina Division-1st Ban, withdrew and took up a position on Iarebitse.

It was not until noon of the 15th that the XIII Austrian Corps commenced its march in two columns.

On the left, the 36th Division moved up the valley of the Iadar on Zavlaka.

On the right the 11th Mountain Brigade and the 13th Infantry Brigade moved by way of the route Losnitsa-Kroupagne.

This movement, which commenced late was hindered by the difficult terrain and by the resistance of small, mobile Serbian detachments which forced the enemy to deploy frequently. At the end of the day the two columns of the XIII Corps had moved about six kilometers and gained contact with the main defensive position of the Serbians.

This position of thirteen kilometers in length was divided into two sectors by the Valley of the Iadar and defended as follows:-the South Sector by three infantry regiments of the Drina 1st Ban, the North Sector by three regiments of the Drina 2nd Ban; twenty 75 S and eight mountain guns supported this defensive position which, fortunately, was strong enough by itself, but as we shall see, was to be threatened on both flanks.

Let us recall that on the evening of the 14th, the 42nd Hungarian Division arrived in the vicinity of Liubovia. There, its commander, verifying the lack of activity on his right in front of the Sixth Army, which he was to assist, decided on his own initiative to come to the aid of the XIII Corps by marching toward Kroupagne. On the morning of the 15th, he commenced his movement, driving before him a half battalion of Serbians, and in the evening he arrived without trouble to the west of Kroupagne, which placed him in a favorable position to assist the XIII Corps in seizing the objectives which had been assigned it.

On the left of the XIII Corps, the VIII Corps, in accordance with the orders of General Franck, had Tekeriche as an objective. In fact, the operation for the day by the XIII Corps consisted of securing the hill mass of the Tser and installing itself on its eastern extremities.

The advance was made in three columns:

On the right, the 9th Division moved up the valley of the Liechnitsa, and arrived at the end of its march at the village of Milna, where it attacked the right of the Serbian position at Iarebitse, which we have just mentioned.

In the center, three infantry regiments of the 21st Division moved upon Tekeriche along the crest of the Tser. By night, some advanced elements of this column reached the ruined chateau of Trojan on Hill 626.

On the left all the artillery of the 21st Division, accompanied by the 4th Infantry Regiment, moved around the Tser from the north; moving from Prgnavor, this column passed through Lipoliste and reached Grouchitch where it halted for the night.

The march of the VIII Corps had been relatively easy, because the major part of the Third Serbian Army had concentrated on the position which this Valley of the Iadar covered. Only weak detachments had attempted to oppose the advance of the enemy in the corridor of Liechnitsa, on the crest of the Tser and upon its northern edge.

But we recall that on the evening of the 14th the Serbian Commander-in-Chief had ordered the Second Army to move two divisions by forced marches towards Tekeriche.

The entry into action of these two divisions at the critical point is going to balance the alarming situation of the Third Army.

The "Combined" 1st Ban Division, headed the column which commenced to march at 3:00 o'clock on the morning of the 15th. As the advance guard reached Veliki-Bosniak, the Commander was preparing to dispose the division in a defensive position when an order arrived from the Commander of the Second Army instructing him to continue at once on Tekeriche and seize Kossanine Grade, (Hill 706) the dominating point of the Tser. At 9:00 P.M. at the end of a march which covered about 50 kilometers, the advance guard arrived at Tekeriche, which it passed and soon came under the fire of Austrian infantry in position at the Chateau of Trojan. Supported by one battery, the three battalions of the regiment constituting the advance guard, deployed and in the darkness which surrounded them, engaged in a combat in which the Serbian infantry, spirited in spite of the 100 kilometers which they had just marched in two days, charged the enemy with the bayonet. The outposts of the Austrians were swept aside, and the enemy, surprised in his bivouac, fled.

The left column of the 21st Division was attacked in its turn at about 2:00 A.M., 16th of August, by a Serbian battalion. The attack was repulsed. Reinforced at 3:00 A.M. by two battalions, it was completely successful this time, and Austrians, seized with panic, fled in complete disorder to Prgnavor, from which they had departed in the morning, the 15th.

The 21st Austrian Division was, on account of this action, momentarily out of the fight and the combined 1st Ban division which had just executed a brilliant stroke, was in an excellent situation.

The Morava 1st Ban Division, which was following the "Combined" 1st Ban Division, arrived during the night of the 15th on the heights of Gradoievitch. The Commander of this division halted his troops in order to give them a few hours of rest and prepared to resume his march at 3:00 A.M. on the 16th toward Tekeriche to support the left of the "Combined" 1st Ban Division and to gain a foothold on Iverak, the southern spur of the Tser, from where he could, in a measure, accomplish his mission of threatening the left flank of the enemy forces moving along the banks of the Iadar.

Upon the Chabats front, as soon as the Austrian Commander brought up the 29th Division to reinforce the bridge-head, the Choumadia 1st Ban Division withdrew some distance to the south of the town to escape the enemy artillery fire, from the effects of which they had suffered on the previous day, and took up a defensive position blocking the routes which lead to Valievo.

The Serbian Cavalry Division took position on its left, forming a screen which connected the troops, facing Chabats with the right of the "Combined" 1st Ban Division.

Thus, on the evening of the 15th of August, the preliminaries of the battle had been completed, the mass of the two armies were in contact.

But, already, we can see that the Austrians, who had at the beginning, freedom of maneuver, had lost the advantage to be gained from it. In these four days, the Serbians have had time to readjust their distribution of troops to face the west instead of the north, where they had been disposed initially, and they had initiated a vigorous counter offensive.

This successful readjustment was due:

(1) To their superior Command, which without attempting a premature maneuver, had quickly gained a knowledge of the enemy's intended direction of attack, and had planned, without delay, a scheme of offensive maneuver.

(2) To the assistance of their covering forces (Third Army) which had been able to check a numerically superior enemy by utilizing combat and maneuver.

(3) To the marching ability of their reserve divisions, certain ones of which covered 100 kilometers in two days and arrived fresh enough after these forced marches to make a successful night attack.

On the Austrian side, the impression that we gain from the events of these four days, is the slowness of operations, a slowness which favored the action of their adversary.

If we concede that the passage of an obstacle like the Drina is a difficult action, we have difficulty in explaining the delays which marked the following days. It appears, also, that after the river was crossed the Austrians had difficulty in maintaining their supply and in moving over the difficult terrain. Witness the curious maneuver of the 21st Division whose infantry advanced along the crest of the Tser while its artillery went around the base of the hill.

But the difficulties of terrain were the same for both opponents and the Serbians had just demonstrated that large units could be moved rapidly in this region. It is true that they had little artillery. But there, one might rightly ask why the Austrians, free to select their point of attack had decided to operate on ground where their obvious superiority in artillery was nullified by such an elongating of columns that it had to remain out of action. Or why they separated on the march these two arms which cannot fight without each other.

3. The Battle (16th-19th August, 1914.)

On the 16th of August the mass of the Serbian and Austro-Hungarian Armies were in contact on the front, Chabats-Tekeriche-Iarebitse-Kroupagne. But, while the Fifth Austrian Army, forming the principal mass of attack, was already deployed and almost entirely engaged, the Serbian Commander was still disposing three divisions of the First Army. It is true that the Sixth Austrian Army immobile in the region between Sarajevo and the frontier, would have been sufficient, if Potiorek had put it in action, to assist the army of General Franck. But the Austrian Commander planned to engage the Sixth Army only when the Fifth Army has gained Valievo. This decision allowed the Serbian Commander to use all his reserves in the battle which the enemy was offering him upon both banks of the Iadar. The Austrians were going to pay dearly for this faulty decision.

First Day--August 16.

Then, on the morning of the 16th the Fifth Austrian Army, which had suffered during the preceding night the defeat of the 21st Division, took up the attack along its entire front.

South of the Iadar, the 11th and 13th Brigades started the attack at 10:00 A.M. This continued with some respites all day. The Drina 1st Ban

Division succeeding in holding its position, but at the cost of serious losses due, in a large measure, to the enemy artillery opposed to which there were twelve 75s and four mountain guns, poorly supplied with ammunition.

North of the Iadar the Drina 2nd Ban Division was not attacked until about 4:00 P.M., by the 36th Austrian Division. The first assault was repulsed. At 6:40 P.M. the Austrians lined up about 500 meters from the Serbian trenches. The Serbian infantry, conserving their ammunition, allowed the enemy to approach to 200 meters, then opened a violent fire which was sufficient to drive them out of the valley. A large number of dead and wounded were left on the ground.

Near Kroupagne, the 42nd Hungarian Division was deceived by the energetic attitude of the Commander of the 5th Infantry regiment, 2nd Ban, who, at the head of two and a half battalions and a handful of volunteers, took the offensive in order to conceal his numerical weakness. The entire Austrian division was deployed to receive this attack. By the end of the day the enemy became aware of his superiority and decided to move forward. Threatened with an attack by forces outnumbering them four to one, the little Serbian detachment withdrew so skillfully during the night that the Austrians did not push forward.

In spite of these tactical successes, the Commander of the Third Serbian Army, who had been compelled to engage his small reserve (3½ Battalions, 3½ batteries 75s) during the day, seeing his left threatened from Kroupagne, decided to withdraw to a position on Zavlaka, about ten kilometers farther to the east. This position dominated, on his right due to the possession of Mount Marianovitch, the Valley of the Iadar, and the road which led from Kroupagne; his left near Ichoumar, covered the route which led from the Drina Valley by way of Petzka.

The withdrawal was effected during the night in the best of order without having the enemy take any action to interfere with it.

Near Tekeriche, the Commander of the Serbian Combined 1st Ban division, utilized the morning to reorganize his units, which the victorious action gained on the preceding night had thrown into some confusion. He organized his main line of resistance there, drew up his plan of artillery fire and had his 4th regiment occupy a reserve position.

This organization was being executed when, at about 6:00 A.M. the regiment on the left of the division was attacked, after a heavy artillery preparation, by the 9th Austrian Division, which as

we have seen, arrived on the evening of the 15th near Milna. The Serbian regiment, after heavy losses, gave way and its withdrawal, forced back the entire division, which retired on the reserve position prepared by the division commander.

But at this time the Morava 1st Ban Division intervened. This unit which had halted on the evening of the 15th at Gradoievits, started to march on the 16th at 2:00 A.M. At about 10:00 A.M. it arrived in deployed formation to the South of Iekeriche, opposite the village of Iougovitch. The 9th Austrian Division directed immediately against this new adversary a heavy artillery preparation, and then launched an attack. The Serbians stood fast under fire. At nightfall, the Austrians attempted to carry the Serbian position at the point of the bayonet. They were repulsed and withdrew, losing contact with their opponent.

The division of Serbian Cavalry arrived at Slatina at about 8:00 A.M. Its Commander decided to attack in the direction Grouchitch-Tchoukovitch. Supported by a regiment of infantry, the Cavalrymen, for whom the route of the 21st Austrian Division had left a clear field, advanced, driving back some weak enemy detachments. One of the regiments reached Bobia (hill 372) upon the north slope of the Tser, and the mass of the division took up a position at the end of the day on Belikamen, covered by outposts at Dobritch and Maovi.

Finally, the Choumadia 1st Ban Division launched at 6:45 A.M., an attack on Chabats. It hit the 29th Division and some elements of the 7th Austrian Division which was moved to the South. The left of the Choumadia Division, overwhelmed by the superior forces, was obliged to yield ground. The Commander of the division then stopped the advance of his right and reinforced his left, which was in contact with the Cavalry division.

At about 4:00 P.M. there happened a rather curious incident, which it is necessary to attribute either to the unfortunate habits of the Austrians or to an ill-considered contempt which existed in this Army for the adversary with whom they were engaged. About 4:00 P.M. a company of Serbian infantry (from the 12th regiment) which was holding Dobritch, saw approaching from Bogosavats, a column of Austrian Infantry. It was the 93rd regiment which was advancing to the south without an advance guard. The Serbians allowed the Austrians to advance within 400 meters of

Dobritsch. They then opened rapid fire which caused a panic in the enemy.

At the end of the day the Austrian forces which had debauched from Chabats withdrew to their base of departure.

On the evening of this day, the Commander-in-Chief of the Serbian Army estimated that the situation was satisfactory on the entire front, except on the left flank of the Third Army where a threat was present. He decided, therefore, to reinforce this army with the Morava 2nd Ban Division, previously withdrawn from the First Army. This unit moved from Oube by way of Valievo on Petzka, where it closed the road which was actually not covered, that would afford an avenue of approach for the Austrians from the vicinity of Lioubovia on the rear of the Third Army. It called for a march of 70 kilometers. As for the two other divisions of the First Army (Timok 1st Ban and Timok 2nd Ban) they withdrew from the battle on reaching Oube and were placed at the disposition of G H Q.

On the Austrian side, gains were made during the 16th only in the vicinity of Kroupagne. The resistance of the Serbians and the difficulty of supply were the reasons for this. The Austrian Commander had now reached the conclusion that the mass of the Serbian forces were now concentrated in front of the Fifth Army, but he did not draw the logical conclusion that the Sixth Army would now have a fine opportunity to go into action. The Commander of the Fifth Army was satisfied to order General Soukotitch, who had united under his command the 42nd Hungarian Division and the 11th and 13th Brigades, to continue his converging action on Zavlaka, proceeding from the vicinity of Kroupagne which had been evacuated by the Serbians. On the other hand, the Second Army was instructed to exert with its IV Corps a strong pressure on the right flank of the Serbians, moving from its base at Chabats. They hoped that this double threat would be sufficient to make the Serbian front give way.

In substance, the 17th passed without much change.

This day, lost to the Austrians, was a day gained for the Serbians who were still disposing troops not yet engaged, that were going to be able to conduct a decisive maneuver.

Second Day--August 17

On the Iadar Sector, the Third Serbian Army had deployed on its new position, its divisions in the same order as the preceding day:-the "Drina 2nd Ban Division" to the north, the Drina 1st Ban Division to the south. Opposite it we find the 36th Austrian Division deployed on both banks of the river, in a good position to engage in action against the Drina 2nd Ban Division and to a certain extent to act in conjunction with the 9th Division against the left of the Second Serbian Army (Morava 1st Ban Division). On the right, the Soukotich groupment (42nd Division 11th and 13th Brigades) was opposed to the Drina 1st Ban Division. The activity on this part of the front was confined to a local attack by the 11th and 13th Brigades which finally was repulsed. Nevertheless, in spite of the inexplicable inertia of the enemy in front of him, General Jourichitch-Sturm, Commander of the Serbian Third Army was justly anxious. An order of General Franck had fallen into his hands which indicated the intention of the Austrian Commander to accentuate the enveloping action against the Serbian left. This intention was denoted by the march of the 12th brigade (48th Division), detached from the Sixth Army, from Lioubovia towards Petzka. But the Morava Division 2nd Ban placed at the disposal of the Third Army had only arrived at Valievo on the evening of the 17th. General Jourichitch immediately sent it an order to continue its march all night upon Petzka. While awaiting its arrival the Lioubovia Detachment covered the approaches south-west of this locality and succeeded in interposing itself in front of the enemy. Upon the front of the Second Serbian Army the Austrians directed a strong attack at the boundary between the Combined 1st Ban Division and the Morava 1st Ban Division. This attack was repulsed thanks to the intervention of a regiment of the Combined Division (5th Regiment) which had been sent out to the ruins of the Trojan Chateau (hill 625) from where it took the Austrians in the flank. The matter was then settled by the installation of the Serbians on the heights of Trojan. The Morava Division, 1st Ban had gained less success. Subjected to violent artillery fire which had shaken it, it was attacked vigorously and compelled to withdraw to the east, but without serious results elsewhere.

The Serbian cavalry division had received orders to reconnoiter the Matchva plain and to operate from the north slope of the Tser against the flank of the enemy force. One of its squadrons pushed on as far as the railway station at Double and there attacked a troop train which quickly turned back toward Chabats, and the regiment which had reached Bobia on the previous day arrived at the outskirts of Prgnavor where it attacked an enemy column which took refuge on the town.

Finally, on the northern front the Choumadia Division advanced toward Chabats. It succeeded on driving back the Austrian advanced elements and occupied Ichar-Selentcha-Pritchinovitch-Ievremotitch; but, on arriving on the outskirts of Chabats, it was halted by heavy artillery fire and strongly intrenched infantry. The Commander of the Choumadia Division believed that he would not be able to capture Chabats without a preparation with large caliber artillery. Towards 7:00 P.M. he received orders to withdraw his forces a sufficient distance from the city to avoid the fire of the enemy artillery.

However, it was the Serbians who gained the advantage from the breaking of the deadlock between the Second Austrian Army and the Choumadia 1st Ban Division, since the movement of enemy forces from Chabats toward the south, upon which the Austrian Commander was counting to lead to the withdrawal from the Serbian front, was stopped.

At the end of the day on the 17th, Serbian G H Q now undisturbed over its flanks, decided to reinforce the Second Army by a division from the First Army in order to seek a decision in the region of the Tser. This was the Timok 1st Ban Division which was placed at the disposal of General Stepanovitch. The Timok 2nd Ban Division, the 1st division not engaged by the First Army was held in strategical reserve at Lazarevats.

Third Day--August 18

The battle began again on the 18th of August, the third day of the decisive action.

Upon the front of the Third Serbian Army, the Austrians were successful. In the afternoon their 36th Division gained Mount Marianovitch to the north of Zavlaka and held it. But this advantage was offset by the defeat of the 42nd Hungarian Division, which was driven back in the direction of Kroupagne, and by that of the 13th Brigade on its right, which the Serbians forced back toward Mramor.

Still further to the south, the arrival of the Morava 2nd Ban Division in the vicinity of Petzka clarified the situation, which up to that time had been rather critical, on the left side of the Third Army. This division engaged in action against the 12th Austrian Brigade, which without offering any resistance, commenced to yield ground.

General Stepanovitch, Commander of the Second Serbian Army, took the offensive with his two divisions.

On the right the combined 1st Ban Division had as objectives, Milna in the narrow valley of the Liechnitsa, and Kossanine-Grade on the crest of the Tser. In the valley, the attack progressed, at first without difficulty, at 4:30 P.M. the Serbians, on the point of gaining Milna, were stopped by a violent storm which made the terrain temporarily impassable. Upon the ridge, the Serbians had been attacked at the instant they commenced their movement. Finally, upon this part of the field of battle night came without the Serbians being able to gain their objectives.

The Morava 1st Ban Division had lost the entire morning in organizing its attack. Not until about 11:00 A.M., on the personal intervention of General Stepanovitch did it get under way and gain some ground. At 4:30 P. M. it gained after a hard struggle the village of Beglouk and repulsed a counter-attack. There also, the storm separated the combatants.

Upon the northern front, it was the Austrian Second Army which took the offensive on this date. It made its main effort against the center of the Choumadia 1st Ban Division. The 10th regiment lost the village of Prichtinovitch and this repulse drew back with it both flanks of the division which reestablished itself upon a line marked from Varna to Tsegovats.

This success of the Second Austrian Army worried the Commander of the Serbian Cavalry division, well disposed however, to threaten the flank and rear of the VIII Corps which was laboriously struggling in the rugged terrain of the Tser. On learning that the Choumadia Division had been strongly attacked, the Commander of the Serbian cavalry decided to place himself in such a position as to insure liaison between the Choumadia and Combined Divisions. He took a position on the front, Bieslovats-Meskovits, and the enemy taking advantage of this circumstance, advanced upon the line, Lipoliste-Dobritch-Maovi.

In brief, on this third day of battle, equilibrium was established upon the front. The Serbian Commander-in-Chief informed General Stepanovitch that the Timok 1st Ban Division was at his disposal unless the situation on the front of the Choumadia 1st Ban Division became worse. Furthermore, General Miloch Boganovitch, Commander of the Oujitse Army received the order to take over the surveillance and defense of the road which led from Rogatchitse to Valievo in order to relieve the Third Army of this anxiety.

Fourth Day- August 19

The 19th was to see the Serbian victory take form. On the left of the Third Army the Morava 2nd Ban Division was able to hold its position only with difficulty. The 12th Austrian Brigade concentrated its efforts upon the Liubovia Detachment, which succeeded in stopping it, thanks to a reinforcement of two and a half battalions, sent by the Commander of the Morava 2nd Ban Division.

The Drina 1st Ban Division was not attacked and in front of its left, the enemy made a voluntary withdrawal. The 13th Austrian withdrew to the left bank of the Tolissavats River. This inactivity of the enemy in this part of the field of battle is all the more inexplicable because on the front of the Drina 2nd Ban Division the 36th Austrian Division took the offensive to extend its gains east of Mount Maria-novitch. The Serbian Division succeeded in checking this vigorous action, thanks to the support of one regiment (17th) sent by the Commander of the Drina 1st Ban Division which as we have just seen had been left unoccupied by the enemy. The struggle stopped upon this part of the field at nightfall. The advance of the Austrians upon the right of the Third Army was nothing to be anxious about. The Serbian Commander considered it a local incident, largely compensated for by the success which the Second Army gained at the same time in the vicinity of the Tser and Iverak.

Actually, the Morava 1st Ban Division executed the attack upon Veliki Glava (hill 367) with one regiment. This offensive was supported by all the artillery at the disposal of this division (20 pieces) which concentrated its fire on the hill top. It was covered on the right by another regiment which adjusted its movement to that of the Combined 1st Ban Division. This vigorously led assault was a complete success and the Austrians fled, pursued so energetically that they did not have time, to reestablish themselves on the crest of Reinegrobe. At the same time, the Morava 1st Ban Division repulsed an attack conducted by two battalions and two batteries detached from the 36th Austrian division which had attempted to come to the aid of the 9th Division and to check its precipitous flight.

At 3:30 P.M. the Commander of the Morava Division formed a pursuing column charged with cleaning up Iverak.

The Combined 1st Ban Division had attempted to capture Kossanine-Grade by a night attack at 12:30 A.M. The operation had failed as a result of the disorder which had arisen among the Serbians who were charged with it. Repeated at daybreak, it was successful and the dominating point of the Tser crest finally fell into the hands of the Combined Division. Its Commander, General Rachitch, immediately formed two pursuit groups, one on the right, composed of two regiments and two batteries marched along the crest in the direction of Liechnitsa, the other on the left, formed of three regiments (one from the 2nd Ban) and three batteries under his personal supervision, moved down the valley of the Liechnitsa.

On the crest, the progress was slow as a result of the difficult terrain, the resistance of the enemy and the exhaustion of the troops. By nightfall, the Serbians had not gone beyond Vesselinosvrh (hill 587) west of Kossanine-Grade. On the other hand, in the valley the pursuit was vigorously conducted. The enemy was driven back each time that he attempted to make a stand and by 7:30 P.M. the Austrians were thrown back beyond the line Iadarska-Slatina-Liechnitsa (about five kilometers from the frontier.)

The Timok 1st Ban Division which had been placed the previous day at the disposal of the Commander of the Second Army had received the mission of attacking on the left of the Morava 1st Ban Division, in the direction of Mount Marianotivch. In spite of the fact that this division moved rapidly and covered fifty-kilometers in twenty-four hours, it did not succeed in going into action that day, its artillery being delayed on the march by impassable roads.

While the Second Serbian Army was gaining this decisive success against the VIII Austrian Corps, suddenly in the vicinity of Chabats the Second Austrian Army finally launched a vigorous offensive. Marshall Potiorek, as a result of the report of General Franck who had informed him of his difficult situation the day before, ordered the Second Army to attack with all available forces. So on the 19th the Choumadia 1st Ban Division was attacked by eight infantry regiments, supported by sixty cannons. The Serbian right (12th regiment) was soon in such a critical condition that the commander of the division decided to withdraw his entire force south of the Dobrava. The withdrawal was accomplished without much difficulty. The enemy did not venture to attack this new position. Without doubt,

the Austrian Commander was worried at the thought of becoming too seriously engaged when he knew that his troops were scheduled to move to a destination in Galacia. However, on the whole, since he was there, it would have been better to have pushed his attack. We can only think that if it was the thought of moving by rail the next day that prevented him from becoming seriously engaged in battle, he played into the hands of his adversary in a singular manner.

In any event, this offensive was too late to change the general situation, at a time when the VIII Corps had just sustained an irretrievable defeat. It was not, however, totally hopeless. Indeed, it led the Commander of the cavalry division to observe the prudent attitude that we have seen him follow on the previous day. He also disposed himself behind the Dobrava, being satisfied to maintain contact with the Choumadia Division without doubt. He would have done better by moving forward rapidly along the north edge of the Tser where he might have threatened and attacked the Austrian troops who were retreating towards the Drina. Such, at least, was the belief of General Stepanovitch, who expressed himself vigorously in criticism of this inactivity.

However, General Franck, Commander of the Fifth Austrian Army on ascertaining the failure of the attack of his XIII Corps and the defeat of the VIII Corps, decided that the battle was lost. He could not expect assistance, either from the Sixth Army, still immobile on his right, or from the Second Army on his left, which had gained only a slight advantage. He had long since engaged all his forces. He could only give an order for a general retreat, for which the VIII Corps had just given the signal. He ordered his army to withdraw behind the Drina.

At Serbian G H Q, the victory now appeared certain. It was anxious to accentuate the success of the Second Army while protecting the flanks against possible attacks that the enemy might conduct there. The orders sent on the evening of the 19th prescribed, therefore, that:--

The Second Army (Cavalry Division, Combined 1st Ban, Morava 1st Ban, and Timok 1st Ban Divisions) drive out the enemy from the Valley of the Jadar, clear out the Tser and operate against the flank and rear of the Austrian forces which were slowing up in their retreat.

The Third Army drive back the enemy in front of it, without neglecting the routes of approach which led from Rogatchitsa to Valievo by way of Debelobrd.

Finally, on the right, the Choumadia 1st Ban Division would be reinforced by the Timok 2nd Ban Division, (the last available division). The Commander of the First Army, General Boio-vitch, would take command of the northern front with the mission of maintaining its integrity until the victory of the Tser was complete.

4. The Victory

On the 19th, before nightfall, the Fifth Austrian Army had commenced its retreat towards the Drina. The retreat continued during the entire night of the 19th-20th, and all day on the 20th. The 20th was marked by a general advance on the west front.

With the Third Serbian Army, the Liubovia Detachment, moved over the road from Petzka to Liubovia and the Morava 2nd Ban Division towards Kroupagne. The Drina 2nd Ban Division, after retaking Mount Marianovitch, moved down the valley of the Iadar on the right bank and the Drina 1st Ban Division marched abreast of it on the left bank.

The Timok 1st Ban Division which had been deployed in the morning, north of the Drina 2nd Ban Division in order to assist it in capturing Mount Marianovitch, no longer had anything to do. In the evening it received orders to reassemble in the vicinity of Mrowska (20 kilometers south of Chabats) in reserve for the northern front.

The Second Army had achieved the victory of the Tser. While the Morava 1st Ban Division had gained Iverak and reached the vicinity of Koziakobreje, northeast of Losnitsa by evening, the combined 1st Ban Division had seized Mount Vidoievitsa by noon and entered Liechnitsa. Part of its artillery bombarded the bridge by which the Austrians were retreating and succeeding in destroying it at about 6:00 P.M. Two pieces, placed on the crest of the Tser, fired toward the north on enemy elements which were retreating before the cavalry division. The latter had been given the mission of marching on Liechnitsa by the north slope of the Tser. Its Commander conceived a plan which consisted of fixing the enemy by attacking him in front with three detachments while he moved along the crest of the tser, which he knew was in the hands of the Combined 1st Ban Division, with his mass. The situation did not call for such caution. Indeed,

the right detachment of the cavalry division attacked with such energy at Grouchitch, that the enemy withdrew in haste towards Lipoliste and Prgnavor, abandoning his artillery and machine guns. On that evening the cavalry division found its way to Bela-Reka, where it was in a position to intercept the route from Leichnitsa to Chabats.

It is true that the cavalry division had three regiments of infantry, with thirty pieces of artillery in front of it. However, except for placing one regiment of infantry to cover itself, the attitude of the enemy during the retreat would have probably justified more daring on the part of the cavalry.

Upon the northern front, the Austrians had again taken the offensive, in the morning, south of Chabats. But at 3:00 P.M. they had withdrawn into the city and to the west.

The Fifth Austrian Army being temporarily out of action, the movement of the Second Army south of the Sava no longer had any justification and Marshall Potiokre ordered it to withdraw north of the river.

By evening of the 20th of August, the battle of the Tser was won. The enemy had withdrawn to the west of the Drina. Only a few Austrian detachments lingered in the vicinity of Lioubovia and Kroupagne. In addition the Austrians had important forces in the country west of Oujitse and they still held Chabats, from which it was impossible for them to resume the offensive to the south. This situation in conjunction with the exhaustion of the Serbian troops who had just made a supreme effort, prohibited the Serbian Commander from continuing the pursuit beyond the Drina.

He ordered the Second and Third Armies to complete the cleaning up of the terrain between Liechnitsa and Lioubovia, and he made the Commander of the First Army, who had under his control the Choumadia 1st Ban Division, the Timok 2nd Ban Division, the Obrenovats detachment, and the Danube, 1st Ban Division (in the Belgrade area), responsible for the entire northern front with special attention directed to the Chabats area. And in order to strengthen this front he called, as we have just seen above, the Timok-1st Ban Division from Mrowska.

During the 21st, the Second and Third Armies completed their missions of clearing out all the country as far as the Drina. They had only the task of driving back or capturing the small enemy detachments that covered the retreat of the main force of the enemy. On their right the cavalry division also stopped on the Drina after

having dispersed a retreating column. In the vicinity of Chabats the Choumadia 1st Ban Division, on the right and the Timok 2nd Ban Division on the left, had approached to within a thousand meters of the edge of Chabats. But the Commander of the First Army postponed the attack until the arrival of the heavy artillery, which commenced to emplace on the next day.

During the 22nd the situation did not change, either on the west front or in front of Chabats. The Serbian Cavalry division cleaned up the Matchwa plain.

Upon the south-west front, the Sixth Austrian Army had taken the offensive; as a precautionary measure the Commander-in-Chief of the Serbian Armies, decided to move towards Valievo, the Timok 1st Ban Division which had been placed in general reserve on the 20th.

On the 23rd of August, there remained only one danger point, Chabats. The Commander of the IV Austrian Corps, feeling himself surrounded by the Serbians, had made an energetic resolution. He recrossed to the south bank of the Sava to gain maneuver space. He hoped by means of this offensive comeback to gain the time necessary to accomplish his complete withdrawal.

In front of him, the Serbians had formed with the Choumadia 1st Ban and Timok 2nd Ban Divisions and one consolidated corps under the command of General Aratchitch, Commander of the Timok Division. This disposition was due to the fact that General Boiovitch, Commander of the First Army had just been put out of action due to wounds. In addition, the cavalry of the two divisions had been assembled on the left flank of the detachment, in order to cover its flank from the direction of the plain. Finally, the artillery started its preparation and soon the city of Chabats was nothing more than a mass of ruins. General Arachitch decided that the attack would take place on the 24th at 2:00 A.M.

On their side, the Austrians had decided to start the offensive at 9:00 A.M. They just made their attack on the right flank of the consolidated corps, and then along the entire front.

At night, they continued to simulate great activity by maintaining artillery and small arms fire. At midnight the Commander of the IV Austrian Corps ordered the withdrawal, which commenced immediately, and was prolonged into the morning. Perceiving the enemy retreat, the Serbian Commander issued at 10:30 A.M. on the 24th the order to attack. By noon the Serbians reached the ruins of Chabats and made themselves

masters of it. By 3:00 P. M. there were not any more Austrians on Serbian territory.

The first Austrian offensive was ended.

This first encounter which we have just imperfectly outlined, is interesting in more than one respect.

The Serbian Commander, compelled by circumstances to assume a delicate attitude of waiting, knew how to face an unexpected situation with incomparable mastery. Without engaging in a premature maneuver which might become the origin of erroneous movements, and without delaying for a dangerous length of time, he changed his dispositions and adapted them to new circumstances with a sureness of decision that did not fail him at any moment of the action.

On the Austrian side, we will not return to the paradoxical situation in which they had placed the Second Army. The Commander of the group of armies in the Balkans, was there for a purpose and one can not understand him making a mistake. But in the conduct of the battle itself his personal action hardly made itself felt. In particular, do we seek in vain to explain why the Sixth Army, whose troops were stationed in peace time in the region where they were called to fight, was held immobile during the battle. The inaction of this army, debatable in the initial plan (when they anticipated a joint offensive of the Second and Fifth Armies) became incomprehensible from the time that the latter was scheduled for the battle fields of Galicia.

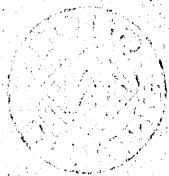
In the matter of execution, the superiority of our Serbian allies was also none the less marked.

The Serbian soldier is sober, a tireless marcher, courageous and disciplined. In the early engagements he was affected by the artillery fire, especially when he received it from the flank, and we cannot blame him too much when we consider the superiority in material of the enemy. But this soldier is calm; he conserves his ammunition; he does not waste it at long ranges; he fires only for good effect. In the assault, he gave proof of the greatest bravery, and the leaders of the small units which engaged in hand to hand combat demonstrated the fiercest courage. In addition, the patriotism of the Serbian soldiers was aroused by the horrors which they discovered in the localities regained from the enemy. The

Austrians as faithful disciples of the Germans had decided "for the sake of humanity" to make the war atrocious in order to make it short.

We are familiar with this theory after having seen it applied on the Franco-Belgian front. Let us understand that this savage attitude of the invader gave to the struggle its true significance. What a powerful spur for this proud race with four hundred years of Turkish bondage had not been able to subjugate.

As for the Austrian soldiers, some fought well, others rather poorly. This army was the faithful image of this artificial state, which had just been hurled into an enormous war. Also depending on the recruiting area to which they belonged, the Austrian or Hungarian regiments went into combat with varied sentiments, which could not fail to complicate the task of the Commander. The Crossing of the Drina and Sava had hardly commenced before reports flowed in describing desertions and offering immunity. And this fact indicates the type of this conflict and explains very well some events which could otherwise not be understood.



Chapter III

The Period Between the Two Serbian Victories (25 August - 5 November, 1914)

1. Regrouping of Forces.

Following the crushing defeat suffered by the Fifth Austro-Hungarian Army in the region of the Tser, we stated that this army took refuge on the left bank of the Drina with a speed that indicated overwhelming loss in morale and material. For their part, the Serbians stopped at the Drina, that is at the frontier, their vigorous and profitable pursuit. They were satisfied to pursue destroy or capture those elements of the enemy which had been delayed or lost in the retreat, and to recapture in a well led action the city of Chabats, where the Second Austro-Hungarian Army had made a bridge head upon the right bank of the Sava, and where, it seemed for a short time, to intend to make a stand.

In snort, in the latter part of August, 1914, since Serbian territory was entirely freed, our brave allies stopped active operations.

This momentary cessation is explained by the following considerations. In the first place, the victorious troops of Prince Alexander urgently needed to rest and recuperate after the intense efforts they had just completed. In the second place, the situation in the Austro-Russian theater of operations was not yet sufficiently clarified for the Serbian Army to attempt to launch a separate offensive against the Double Monarchy whose resources were immense in comparison with those at the disposal of Serbia. It is important to recall, that while the Russians in these closing days of August had gained a victory in Galicia, with their two left armies (3rd and 8th), which opened up the avenues of approach to Lemberg, the situation was still indecisive in the center between the Bug and Vistule and that the German victory of Tannenburg against the Russians was accomplished on August 30.

With such information the Serbian Command was justified in supposing that decisive action had not yet been produced on the main front and that a prudent attitude was necessary for the time being.

In fact, General Conrad, Chief of Staff of the Austro-Hungarian Army, estimating very accurately the magnitude of the task which was presented in his main theater of operations, and to whom the wretched result of the Potiorek offensive had left no illusions upon the futility of a new operation in Serbia, may have desired that the forces opposed to Prince Alexander maintain the defensive in the most economical manner. Because he estimated, and not without reason, that it was in Poland and Galicia that the decisive action would take place and that it was there that he should apply all the efforts and resources of the Monarchy.

But politics sometimes has reasons for a line of action that strategy cannot understand. At Vienna the defeat of the Tser had been resented as a burning insult that it was impossible to endure without taking action. It appeared dangerous for the interior tranquility of the Empire to leave the impression of a Serbian victory with the Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Do not forget that for the statesmen, both at Vienna and Budapest the war they had just commenced was for the purpose of definitely solving the Slavic problem. The Germans and the Hungarians in the Empire ought to bring to reason, without delay, this little Serbian nation which was so proudly defending its own independence and the cause of the Slavs. In addition, the victory of the Tser could not fail to create a great sensation in the Balkans. The hopes with which they deluded themselves at Vienna when they thought of Bulgaria close by and fearful on account of the recent defeats and Roumania farther away and more unknown, caused them to risk being defeated.

Count Berchtold, minister of foreign affairs now felt that it was necessary for him to intervene. This unusual intervention in the direction of operations immediately precipitated a dispute between the Austro-Hungarian G H Q and Potiorek, the latter vigorously sustained by the government of Francis-Joseph.

Here is the beginning of a dispute, the finish of which we shall see at the close of this chapter.

Conrad firmly imbued, as we have already stated, with the idea that the fate of the monarchy would be decided in Galicia, demanded that the remaining elements of the Second Army (IV Corps) destined for the main front, be moved, without delay. Potiorek instantly demanded that he be allowed to keep them. Conrad stood fast and the Emperor yielded while

There is a certain analogy between the distribution of troops and that which had been expected at the commencement of the first Austro-Hungarian offensive in the early part of August 1914. In both cases the forces which Potiorek disposed were located on both sides of the Ratcha salient on two fronts meeting at right angles, a fact which indicated a converging effort was intended toward Valievo. In the system effected at the end of August, the forces forming the northern prong of the pinchers were constituted by the Lutgendorf group of two divisions.

This group was of less importance numerically than the Second Army which was concentrated in this same region at the beginning of August. But, to offset this, Potiorek had freedom of maneuver. He had not, therefore, lost in the change.

At this point the resemblance between the two situations ceases.

At the beginning of August the two principal armies, the Fifth and the Sixth were aligned along the Drina, one from Ratcha to Zvornik, the other from Srebrenitsa to Fotcha, which represented a total deployment of 160 kilometers. We know, moreover, that the Sixth Army remained practically inactive while the Fifth was engaged in action.

In the disposition effected at the end of August, the Fifth Army was restricted to the Ratcha-Iagna front (28 kilometers). The Sixth was brought closer to the Fifth. It was disposed on the Losnitsa-Lioubowia front (60 kilometers). The strategic deployment of these two armies has therefore been reduced to 88 kilometers, being 72 kilometers less than at the beginning of August and they are no longer separated by any interval. In fact, they were elbow to elbow. Only a landsturm brigade at Srebrenica and an infantry division spread out from Vichegarde to Fotcha, constituted on the right flank of the Sixth Army, a covering force which temporarily protected the road to Sarajevo. The 1st Division was recalled to its corps at the beginning of the offensive.

General Potiorek had, therefore, corrected the defective concentration of the early part of August, the objections to which we have referred in the early part of this study.

We might think that the relative ease with which the Austrians penetrated Serbia at the time of their second offensive was due to the fact that the Commanding General of the Balkan Army had profited from the severe lesson he had just received.

At the same time, it is not out of place, for a comprehension of the events which are to follow, to indicate that the concentration of the Fifth and Sixth Armies toward the north opened up the deep Valley of the Praca and the route to Sarajevo. As we shall see later on, this fact did not escape the notice of the Serbian Commander who was to profit by it in the following October, by initiating in Bosnia an operation which was to have the gravest consequence for the Austrians.

But let us return to our narrative of events. On the 26th of August Potiorek received from Vienna a telegram in which he was informed: "Count Tisza fears an invasion of Hungary from the South."

On the 26th of August, the air service and reconnaissance reports indicated that the Serbians were planning an offensive upon the front Liechnitsa-Losnitsa.

On September 1st, General Potiorek made the following report:

"Numerous reports from the air service and other sources indicate that the mass of the Serbian Army is located upon the Drina and west of the line-Chabats-Valievo, and that it will probably attempt within the next few days to force a crossing over the lower Drina or the Sava between Chabats and Mitrovitsa."

This report shows, as we shall see, that the Commander of the Balkan Army was as accurately informed upon the disposition of his opponent as upon their intentions.

But Potiorek did not seem to consider these plans of the Serbian Command seriously. He planned to take the offensive in a few days. The forces which he had at his disposal, (Fifth and Sixth Armies and the Lutgendorf Group) at this time numbered about 174 battalions, according to the estimate of Conrad.

But the Chief of Staff did not share this serene optimism. On the 1st of September, in reply to the report received from Potiorek, which we have just quoted, he telegraphed to the Commander of the Balkan Army:

"It is of the greatest importance to avoid any repulse in action with the Serbians. Your excellency should be careful to see that his operations are assured of success. Here, it is estimated that this condition will best be fulfilled if the action assumes the form of a counteroffensive launched at the time of the Serbian attack, forcing the crossing of the rivers."

Potiorek replied on the 4th:

"-----we now consider ourselves strong enough and I beg you not to force us to await the Serbian offensive-----I ask that your excellency act as my spokesman to his Imperial and Royal Highness so that he may authorize the forces in the Balkans to fulfill their mission by offensive action."

Conrad, probably contrary to best judgment, sent the authorization requested by the Commander of the Balkan Army who immediately issued his orders for launching an offensive on the 7th of September.

But on the 6th, the Serbians crossed the Sava.

2. The Serbian Offensive in Srem (Syrmie) (6th-14th September, 1914)

We have said that the Serbian Command, while appreciating, at its proper value, the importance of the victory if had gained on the Tser, estimated that it was impossible to engage in important operations in Hungarian territory.

However, feeling closely allied to the Russian Armies and informed of the transfer of troops which the Austro-Hungarian General Staff was making from the Sava front to the Galician theater, Prince Alexander decided to execute with his limited means an operation in Srem (Syrmie) which in view of the events we have described should be considered as a simple maneuver of diversion, with a limited objective and not an offensive on a large scale.

Let us recall that at the beginning of the battle of the Tser, the Serbian forces were disposed as follows: Sketch 5)

- a. On the Northern Front (Danube-Sava)
Branitchievo Detachment: consisting of the Danube 2nd Ban Division reinforced by troops of the 3rd Ban. Total, 20 Battalions.

Belgrade Detachment, consisting of the Danube 1st Ban. Total, 20 Battalions

Obrenovats Detachment, consisting of six Battalions of the 2nd and 3rd Bans.

First Army, consisting of the Coumadia and Timok 2nd Ban Division in the Chabats area.

b. On the Western Front (Drina.)

Second Army, guarding the lower Drina below Liechnitsa. Consisting of a cavalry division; Combined 1st Ban and Morava 1st Ban Divisions. In rear of this army, the Timok 1st Ban Division was in G H Q reserve.

Third Army, covering from Liechnitsa to Lioubovis, consisting of the Drina 1st Ban, Drina 2nd Ban and Morava 2nd Ban Divisions.

Oujitse Army, on the upper Drina, consisting of the Choumadia 2nd Ban Division (less three regiments), and the Oujitse Brigade.

The Commander of the First Army was charged with the diversion operation of which we have just spoken, which consisted of crossing the lower Sava and invading Srem in the rectangle formed by the lower Sava from Yarak to Zemun and by the Danube from Zemun to Batajnica.

The principal action was confined to the Choumadia 1st Ban Division, which received orders to cross the Sava in the vicinity of Novo Celo. To the west the Timok 1st Ban Division was to force the river between Mitrovitsa and Yarak. To the east the Danube 1st Ban Division was to cross to the left bank upstream from Belgrade near Ostroujnitsa and seize Zemun. Finally the Danube 2nd Ban Division was withdrawn from the Branitchezo detachment and located at Obrenovats, ready to participate in action.

The area selected for this local action was well adapted for the object that the Serbian Command had in mind. For one thing they could count on the sympathy of the inhabitants of Srem. Moreover, the advance would be covered on the east by the Danube above Belgrade and on the west by the Sava from Chabats to Mitrovitsa.

The operations commenced during the night of the 5th-6th of September. The Choumadia 1st Ban Division crossed the river without meeting appreciable resistance and by evening of the 6th had seized a bridge-head between Projar and Vitoievitsi, under the cover of which its artillery was able to cross the Sava without difficulty.

But to the west, the Timok 1st Ban Division met with less success. Its two leading regiments had hardly reached the left bank before they were attacked by the 29th Austrian Division, driven back toward the river and forced for the most part to surrender. The enemy in his official reports announced the capture of 63 officers, 4800 men, 4 cannons, and 10 machine guns.

Finally, to the east, the Danube 1st Ban Division succeeded in forcing over small groups north of the Sava, but these did not succeed, at first, in extending the narrow bridgehead which they had gained. In spite of the defeat suffered by its neighbor on the left and the partial success of its neighbor on the right, the Choumadia 1st Ban Division succeeded during the following days in gaining ground and it reached the line Yarak-Prahovo. This permitted the Danube 1st Ban Division to occupy Zemun while on the Danube a small Serbian detachment succeeded in gaining a foothold in Banat, a fact which caused the enemy command and civil authorities great uneasiness.

But at that point the operation in Syrmie stopped. The two Serbian divisions now had to fight against the 29th and 7th Divisions from the Lutgendoft group. These were reinforced by some landstrum elements hurriedly assembled and furnished by the military commander of Budapest. Moreover, other and more serious events now demanded the attention of the Serbian Command. During the night of the 7th-8th of September, the Fifth and Sixth Austro-Hungarian Armies had resumed the offensive on the Drina. Not willing, and rightly so, to disperse his forces at the moment when he was going to need them, to face this new invasion, Prince Alexander ordered the Commander of the First Army to move back all his troops to the right bank of the Sava. On the 14th this was accomplished and the Austro-Hungarian Command was able to announce in its report to the Emperor on the 16th of September that Srem and Banat were evacuated by the Serbians.

3. The Beginning of the Second Austro-Hungarian Offensive in Serbia
(7th-15th September, 1914)

The offensive that General Potiorek had received permission to undertake commenced on the night of the 7th-8th of September. At first only the Fifth and Sixth Armies participated, the Lutgendoft group being occupied, as we have just seen, in repelling the Serbian First Army which at this time was gaining a foothold in Srem.

The attack of the Drina by the Fifth Army failed completely in spite of heavy losses. The XIII Corps, alone, admitted a loss of 4000 men. The Sixth Army, doubtless because it was fresher, had more success. It succeeded in crossing the river and gained a foothold on the heights west of Losnitsa and Kroupagne. By the 16th of September it had gained the high ground which dominated this latter locality from Goucevo to Sanac, and was attempting to continue its advance towards Iarebitze and Zavlaka. The south wing of the Fifth Army then commenced to force the Drina being assisted by the left (XV Corps) of the Sixth Army. The north wing succeeded in gaining a foothold in the angle of the Drina-Sava.

The advance of the Sixth Army placed the Third Serbian Army, which was opposed to it, in a difficult situation. If, on its right the two Drina divisions stood fast in the Iadar corridor without taking offensive action, the Morava 2nd Ban Divisions would be uncovered. In this area they could only oppose the Austrians with some units of the 3rd Ban which resisted, rather poorly, the pressure placed on them.

In the light of this situation which could not be allowed to become worse without danger, the Serbian Command made an energetic decision which indicated once more the confidence that it had in the maneuver ability of its troops.

First of all, General Michitch, who had just replaced General Boiovitch, who had been wounded at the close of the battle of the Tser, as commander of the First Army, received orders to stop his offensive in Srem and to bring back all his forces to the right bank of the Sava.

The Danube 2nd Ban Division coming from Branitchievo by way of Belgrade had arrived at Skela (11 kilometers west of Obrenovats) and was preparing to participate in the offensive north of the Sava. It received orders to move by forced marches on Valievo and Petzka and to come under the control of General Yourichitch, Commander of the Third Army.

On the 11th, the Commander-in-Chief ordered General Michitch to move in a similar manner, the Drina 1st Ban Division to the aid of the Third Army. Then the Choumadia 1st Ban Division was to follow this movement in its turn. This called for a march by these three units, of 120 kilometers over highways and on foot, of course.

On the 16th and 17th the Danube 1st and Danube 2nd Ban Divisions moved successively on line to the left of the Third Army where they reconstituted the First Army under the command of General Michitch who had arrived to join them. Under their vigorous attack, the right of the Sixth Austrian Army made a considerable withdrawal. And the Fifth Army which had commenced to gain ground east of the Drina immediately came to a standstill and in some places even lost ground.

However, while the Serbian Command had succeeded by this rapid maneuver in propping up its wavering Third Army, a new danger appeared on the right wing.

General Kraus at the head of a Combined Corps, consisting of four brigades taken from the 7th and 29th divisions crossed the Sava in his turn in the Mitrovitsa-Chabats area, which was stripped of Serbians on account of the successive departure of the divisions of the First Army. The troops of General Kraus entered Matchva and assisted the right wing of the VIII Corps which was debauching from Ratcha with difficulty.

Soon there was another readjustment on the Serbian side. The Choumadia 1st Ban Division, which had commenced its movement to the south behind the two divisions, Danube 2nd and Danube 1st, was halted and turned with all haste to the rescue of the right of the Second Army which was threatened by the converging advance of the Fifth Austro-Hungarian Army and its Combined Corps under Kraus. This action of the Choumadia-1st Ban Division forced General Kraus who had advanced west of Chabats to Stitar to

withdraw to the line Glusci-Usveze-Pricinovic covered on his left by the monitors anchored off the heights of Drenovats.

4. The Serbian Offensive in Bosnia (15th September-25th October)

About the 20th of September, equilibrium was established between the two adversaries upon the entire front from Chabats to the Tser and from the Tser to the edge of Kroupagne.

But the Serbian command had only waited for the situation to become stabilized in order to attempt the solution of this new crisis by a maneuver which it was going to intrust to the Oujitse. This army had remained inactive up to the present, being satisfied to guard on the right bank of the Drina, the roads which converged on Oujitse.

The occasion was now presented for it to enter into action under conditions which appeared eminently favorable.

In effect, as we have indicated previously General Potiorek had shortened the front of the Sixth and Fifth Armies on the left of the latter. This concentration had resulted in stripping the narrow valley of Drina of Austro-Hungarians. From Fotcha to Vichgarde over a front of 60 kilometers there remained not more than eight mountain brigades. At Srebrenitsa was the 9th Depot Brigade, composed of landstrum soldiers.

This situation had not escaped the attention of the Serbian high command who, as soon as the hostile offensive commenced, had ordered General Bojanovitch to move the mass of the Oujitse Army to the Drina, and as soon as the intentions and action of the enemy were discovered he was ordered to cross the river and march on Vlassenitsa in order to threaten the right wing of the Sixth Austro-Hungarian Army and its lines of communication.

As we have stated above, the Oujitse Army was made up of the Choumadia 2nd Ban

Division and the Oujitse Brigade (less two regiments). It was reinforced by a Supermunery regiment (Michitch regiment), by the Lim detachment, consisting of six battalions which since the opening of the campaign had been stationed at Priboi where it guarded the narrow valley of the Lim. In all there were 30 battalions, 48 field and mountain guns, and one battery of 120 howitzers.

In the execution of these orders the Oujitse Army moved resolutely forward.

On the 15th of September its mass crossed the Drina at Vichegrade while the Michitch regiment crossed at Baillina Bachta. The enemy did not offer serious resistance at either place. Immediately, the Oujitse Army directed its movement toward the heights of Han-Piesak which dominated the railroad whose terminal, Kusache, served to supply the Sixth Austro-Hungarian Army.

On the 28th of September the Choumadia 2nd Ban Division entered Vlassenitsa. At the same time General Bosanovitch gained contact with the Montenegrin troops of General Vukotich who was marching on Sarajevo. The headquarters of the military district of Bosnia Herzegovina was defended by a strong garrison of $9\frac{1}{2}$ battalions, 3 companies of fortress artillery, 5 detachments of landstrum, 1 company of sappers and 3 detachments of soldier mechanics. The mobile reserve of artillery consisted of 2 batteries of mountain artillery, 3 batteries of 100 m. m. mountain howitzers and 1 battery of 90 m. m. guns. The defensive works which had been undertaken around the place had been completed.

The appearance of the Serbians in Bosnia appeared serious to General Potiorek. His two armies were contained in front and had at their rear a river with a swift current, the crossing of which after the battle of the Tser had left a bad memory in the minds of the Austrian soldiers. And the threat caused by the movement of the Oujitse Army behind the right of the Sixth Army became so serious that the Serbians in Bosnia commenced to revolt.

The Austrian offensive blow on the Drina stopped short and Potiorek took measures to guard against this danger.

The 13th mountain brigade with some artillery was taken from the XVI Corps and sent to join the eighth mountain brigade, which belonged to the 16th Corps, to oppose the advance of the Oujitse army in the vicinity of Han Piesak. A newly formed regiment of landstrum was sent to Olovo to cover the valley of the Huvaja. It was joined there by two battalions and a battery arriving from Vares. Finally, the 3rd mountain brigade also withdrawn from the XVI Corps was sent to meet the Montenegrins.

These timely measures had the effect of checking the advance of the Oujitse Army and it even made a withdrawal south of Han Piesak. But the threat which hung over the rear of the Sixth Army continued to exist.

General Potiorek then charged General Wurm, Commander of the XVI Corps, with the solution of this problem. In addition to the forces already mentioned, General Wurm received successively, the 5th mountain brigade (taken from the XVI Corps) which rejoined the 13th Brigade, then the 16th mountain brigade, organized from landstrum troops and finally the 15th mountain brigade, assembled at Sarajevo.

The total of the forces operating on the right wing of the army of the Balkans, under the command of the Commander of the XVI Corps was divided into the following manner:

The commander of the 18th Division assumed charge of the 8th, 13th, and 5th brigades in the Vlassenitsa area.

The new division, the 50th, composed of the 3rd and 15th brigades, under the command of General von Pongrats was located in the Sarajevo area.

While the 18th Division attacked the Oujitse Army in the front from a north to south direction, the 50th Division operated against the left of this army while dispersing the Montenegrin bands.

The forces of the XVI Corps remaining on the Drina opposite the principal Serbian forces formed a composite division under the command of Major-General Goiginger. This division was temporarily attached to the XV Corps.

The battle between the Oujitse Army and the forces placed at the disposal of General Wurm commenced on the 18th of October. For four days the Serbians made a successful resistance against an adversary superior in strength. But the threat made by the advance of the 50th Austrian Division which was moving along the Gromile-Rogatchitsa road forced General Bojanovth to abandon the action. By the 25th of October his army had completely crossed over to the right bank of the Drina.

In brief, the naeuver conceived by the Serbian High Command had, for more than a month (from mid-September to the end of October) held the enemy under a threat which had forced him to halt and move to his threatened right wing important forces. But executed, due to lack of available resources, with insufficient means, it ended, by the withdrawal of the Oujitse Army to national territory, which caused the reestablishment of the serious situation existing at the end of September.

In fact, if the front, stabilized at the end of September had not been sensibly changed during the offensive of the Oujitse Army, the situation of the Serbian forces had been aggravated to an extent which was going to have serious consequences.

The causes of this situation were many.

First of all, the lack of munitions which we mentioned in the first pages of this study was reaching the acute stage. By the end of the battle of the Tser, the artillery had received orders to fire only in case of absolute necessity, or when it had objectives in front of it that were worthy of the expenditure. During the period which we have just outlined the meager supply of ammunition had decreased to the point where it was necessary to withdraw from the front, batteries whose cassions were empty. The arsenal at Kragouievats had a very small capacity for production and the munitions asked from France had not arrived.

To this fact, which reacted severely on the morale of the soldier, there were added others which acted on his physical well being. Clothing and equipment had been ruined by this hard three months campaign. Since the beginning of September it had rained continuously. The temperature had become colder, and winter had already commenced in the mountainous region when the major portion of the army was fighting.

Finally, the supply of rations in a region of few resources, which was meager in wagon roads that heavy traffic had already ruined, was accomplished with the greatest difficulty.

The difficulty with which the command maintained the armament and equipment of front line troops slowed up the arrival of reinforcements to increase the number of effectives. Men at the depots received a number of old-fashioned Russian weapons, in which there was little confidence. And these arms of poor quality, furnished by Russia who was herself already suffering from lack of weapons were insufficient in quantity to arm all available men.

This gloomy picture, fortunately had another side. The condition of the Austro-Hungarians was no longer very attractive. The system of supply, conducted rather poorly under ordinary conditions, and the resources of a rather poor country, already exploited by two adversaries, had reached a low ebb. Although better clothed than the Serbians, the Austro-Hungarians also suffered from the bad weather and low temperature. And they observed, anxiously, the Drina which was flowing a short distance behind them, swollen to a tumultuous flood by rains and over which they had crossed in a panic several weeks previously.

One day in October, the 42nd Hungarian Division which was fighting near Losnitsa, saw the bridge in its rear damaged by flood to such an extent that passage over it was nearly impossible. Informed of this fact, the Serbians attacked this division, which withdrew from action and hastily fled to the Bosnia bank of the river. This incident shows how precarious the condition of the armies of Potiorek still was in the month of October, 1914, and what danger they would have run if the Serbians themselves had not been handicapped by their lack of material.

Besides, from the point of view of munitions the Balkan Army, although infinitely richer than the opposing army had the impression (one easily gets this impression in war) that it had been denied its proper share for the benefit of the principal front in Galicia. This state of mind, shared by

General Potiorek, gave birth to a new incident which constituted the epilogue of the conflict whose origin we indicated at the beginning of this chapter.

On the 21st of September, Conrad wrote in his memoirs that Archduke Frederick, Commander-in-Chief, received a letter from the Emperor saying that Field Marshall Potiorek complained that they were failing to supply him munitions.

General Conrad, angered, ordered Marshall Kanik, Chief of the Service of Supply at G H Q to make an immediate investigation, from which it was brought out that the army of the Balkans was better supplied than the armies of Galicia. A complete report was immediately addressed to the Emperor and a telegram expedited to Potiorek which stated: "I have learned with the greatest astonishment that your Excellency has complained by special channels of the subject of the supply of the Fifth and Sixth Armies. In addition to the fact that these armies are more liberally supplied than the others, I desire to state that in all circumstances your Excellency will confine himself to official channels in addressing Supreme Command and abstain from settling Serbian affairs by special channels." Some days passed. On the 25th of September Conrad noted in his memoirs: "At the same time, the personal position of the Commander of the forces in the Balkans, Marshall Potiorek, was made stronger. One could no longer disregard the fact that they wished to separate him entirely from G H Q, and give the struggle in Serbia first priority, and direct its conduct directly from Vienna."

An exchange of letters was made between Conrad and Baron Bolfras, Military Chancellor of the Emperor, after which Conrad notes with melancholy: "He (Potiorek) was able to conduct himself in the Balkan theater in accordance with his own inspirations and he was freed from the interference of G H Q.---- He had gained complete confidence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Berchtold."

Thus the conflict which had arisen between Conrad and Potiorek, or to be more exact, between G H Q and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was ended by the rupture of unity of Command in the Austro-Hungarian Armies..

Now in possession of complete liberty, the Commander of the Balkan Army, warmly supported by Vienna, was going to be able to pursue his operations in Serbia.

We shall see in the recital which follows that the government rejoiced in this decision which resulted in the following events: The Serbian retreat, the capture of Belgrade which was loudly announced to the world as the approaching end of Serbia. But the magnificent offensive come-back of the armies of Prince Alexander on the banks of the Koloumbara, dissipated these too hastily conceived hopes and justified the opinion passed on Conrad by a man who had seen him at work:--

"The ideas of the Austro-Hungarian Chief-of-Staff were good, at least those I am familiar with. The misfortune of this genial man was that the instrument of putting these ideas in operation was lacking." (General Max Hoffman, Chief-of-Staff, German Armies.)

Chapter IV

The Victory of Koloubara (Sketch Number 6)

I. The Withdrawal from the Drina to the Koloubara.

We have outlined at the close of the preceding chapter the condition as to morale and material of the two adversaries in the closing days of October, 1914.

At the end of October the strategical situation of the Serbians had become obviously more critical.

On their right flank, the heavy Austrian artillery assisted by the guns from the monitors had forced General Stepanovitch, Commander of the Second Army, to readjust his front on Chabats, Dobrits, the Tser and Losnitsa, abandoning the entire plain of Matchva to the enemy. The Austrians were in possession, from this time on, of a vast area which afforded an ample base for their next offensive.

On the extreme Serbian left, the Oujitse Army had been compelled to recross to the east bank of the Drina after its unprofitable attempt against the line of communications of the Sixth Austro-Hungarian Army.

Freed from the threat on his right, his left firmly established on Matchva, General Potiorek was able to utilize the first part of November for reconstituting his forces which the Serbian invasion of Bosnia had compelled him to break up. And now free to conduct, in his own fashion, his operations in Serbia, without being afraid of the advice or the orders of G H Q, assured of the support of the government, he was impelled to act without delay, and gave the order to resume the general offensive on the 6th of November.

On the 5th an artillery preparation commenced on the entire front.

The organization and composition of the armies had been revised. The Fifth Army was now composed of the Combined Corps (7th and 29th Divisions and 104th Brigade of landstrum)

and the VIII Corps (9th and 21st Divisions).

The Sixth Army had three Corps; the VIII (36th and 42nd Divisions), the XV, (1st and 48th Divisions, and 40th Division), and the XVI (Combined Division, 18th and 50th Divisions, and the 4th Mountain Brigade.)

When the new Austro-Hungarian offensive was launched, the Sixth Army attacked on the front from Rozagne to Losnitsa, while the Fifth made its effort on a line which started at Liechnitsa and extended as far as Chabats.

For the Serbian G H Q, the general attack was not a surprise, and immediately it took the action, which a peculiarly delicate situation, caused by the fact that all the Serbian force had long since been committed, dictated.

After considering for a time a solution which consisted of straightening out and shortening the front by establishing it on a line defined by Chabats, the eastern slopes of the Tser, and Rozagne, Prince Alexander and General Putnik adopted a more radical measure, and on the 10th of November, the Second, Third, and First Armies received a directive instructing them to fall back on a defensive position extending from north to south through Oube, Karaoula; Blessanski-Vissoi; Iaoutina; Prosssek; Martinovitch, Kamenitsa; Iolinabreze; Stave, Lovatchikik. The right of this position was to be covered by the Ohrenovats detachment and the cavalry division, while on the left, contact was to be maintained near Rogatchitsa by a detachment of the First Army, with the Oujitsse Army, now in observation on the right bank of the flooded Drina.

He decided, in brief, to execute a retrograde movement, which would free the right wing (Second Army) from the threat of an envelopment which hung over it, while on the left, the defense would be fixed on the line of high ground which dominated to the West, the narrow valley of the Iadar and closed to the east the roads which converged on the important center of Valievo.

The withdrawal commenced at once. It had hardly started before the Serbian Commander realized the state of exhaustion which his troops had reached; fatigue, lack of food, bad weather had constituted severe trials for them while they were fighting in the positions they had held since the end of August. These trials were aggravated, now that they were

executing a rearward movement, the extent of which they were ignorant. To the depressing impression produced in the soldier by the abandonment of ground upon which he had been victorious, was added the desolate spectacle of the population fleeing the invader, mixed in with the columns of the army. The impression produced in the troops by the exodus of the population was especially vivid in the two Drina Divisions, residents of the country which they were abandoning to the enemy. Some of the men of these divisions momentarily quit their organizations in order to save their families, fleeing before the invasion.

While the morale of the Serbians fell, that of the Austro-Hungarian soldiers, encouraged by success, rose. Moreover, the pursuit, was vigorously conducted by the armies of Potiorek in spite of the strong resistance of the Serbian rear guards.

In view of this situation, the Serbian G H Q decided not to halt the retreat on the front that we have just described above, but to continue it until the mass of the armies could be disposed on the right bank of the Koloubara. This decision would give a longer interval to get the troops in hand before attempting a new battle. It had, in addition, the advantage of drawing the army closer to its base of supply, and to reestablish it in a region not yet exploited. It also obliged the enemy to move away from his own bases and lengthened his lines of communication over a country that was naturally difficult and ruined by three months of war.

As a consequence, the Serbian Armies received orders to continue their movements to the rear and dispose themselves on the following positions:

The Second Army upon the front Volouyak-Tchowska (lower part of the Koloubara).

The Third Army upon the Lygne (right branch of the Koloubara) from Tchiboukovitsa to Goukochi.

The First Army with its right at Goukochi, its left on Mount Malyene (997), its center aligned on Hill 707, Mount Batchinats (700) Ruda, Ielyak.

The Second Army which had reached the vicinity of Oube, without hindrance in carrying out its orders of November 10th, continued its movements

without much trouble, crossed the Koloubara during the night of the 15th-16th, and disposed itself on the position which had been assigned, covered on the left bank of the river by strong rear guards.

On its right the cavalry division was located in the vicinity of Konatitse in contact with the Obrenovats detachment which occupied the Mislodjine Sector (junction of the Koloubara).

The withdrawal of the Third and First Armies was more difficult, on account of the difficulties of the terrain, and perhaps also because the staff had not defined clearly enough the zones of withdrawal for each army.

The Third Army withdrew from the heights which dominated Valeivo to the northwest, towards that city where all the roads in that region converged. From there, its main body went along the road which follows the left bank of the Koloubara, which it crossed at Slovats and Divtci. By the morning of the 16th this army had reached the zone, Stromvo-Nanomir-Bele-Stena-Mionitsa, its rear guards covering the bridge at Divtci by holding Klanitsa and Papoutche.

The First Army also drew back on Valievo, then utilized the road on the right bank of the river which led to Choucheoka.

By the evening of the 15th, it was assembled in the area Klintsi, Raikovitchi, Maitatchitch.

As a result of the bottle neck at the bridges at Divtci and Choucheoka, critical delays were caused in the rearward movements of these two armies. Fortunately, the enemy, who ran into the same difficulties on these rutted roads as the Serbians, commenced to slacken his pursuit and was unable to profit from the difficulties encountered by his adversary in the course of his retreat.

As for the Oujitse Army it withdrew on the front Varda-Ielova-Gora-Kadignatcha, covering the city of Oujitse. Between this army and the first, contact was maintained by the Rogat Chitsa detachment which was moved from the point to Batchevtsvo.

On the 16th of November the positions and organization of the Serbians were as follows, from north to south:

The Second Army, covered on its right by the cavalry division and the Obrenovats detachment, was organizing a defensive position, along the east bank of the Koloubara with three divisions:

The Choumadia, 1st Ban in the Yolouiak Sector.

The Timok 1st Ban in the Lazarevats Sector between the Pechtau and Doubitsa Rivers.

The Morava 1st Ban on the left flank from Lazarevats, exclusive to the mouth of the Lygne.

The Third Army had also completed its withdrawal and was in position on the front Tchowska-Katcher River.

The Drina 2nd Ban Division, on the right flank, had for its principal mission the covering by flanking fire of the left of the Second Army and the front of the Third, held by the Combined 1st Ban and the Drina 1st Ban Divisions.

The Timok 2nd Ban Division was in reserve in rear of the center of the army.

The First Army, after a forced march, was on the point of occupying its positions as follows:

The Morava 2nd Ban Division had arrived at Goukochi, where it was commencing to organize.

The Danube 1st Ban Division was at Gorgny Toplitsa

The Danube 2nd Ban Division was southwest of this locality.

The Oujitse Army completed its short withdrawal as we have indicated above.

As soon as the Austro-Hungarian Army had felt the resistance of the Serbians slacken on the Drina, it had redoubled its attacks and pressed its pursuit on the heels of the Serbian rear guards.

The Fifth Army advanced on the front between the south bank of the Sava and the Tamnava. The Sixth Army followed the Serbians by advancing on both sides of the Iadar Valley and the road, Liechnitsa-Kamenitsa-Valievo.

On the 15th of November the Fifth Army approached the position on the Koloubara.

On the left flank the combined Kraus Corps covered by the 104th Landstrum Brigade in the vicinity Obrenovats, crossed the Tamnava at Piroman (29th Division) and Tsrvena Iabouka (7th Division) and deployed on the front Lys-sopolie-Brgule.

The VIII Corps forced a crossing of the Oube River near the city of the same name, and its main body (21st and 9th Divisions) halted southeast of this locality.

On the same day, the left of the Sixth Army (XIII Corps, 36th and 42nd Divisions) gained a foothold on the Blissonska Vissoi Iaculina position which the Serbians had given up defending. At the end of the day this corps halted in the vicinity of Kara-oula (Hill 302).

The center of the Sixth Army (XV Corps) had advanced on a wide front on both sides of the Savlaka-Valievo road. The 48th Division had entered Valievo where it was engaged in severe street fighting.

Finally, on the right of the Sixth Army, the XVI Corps had halted southwest of Valievo on the front Paklye-Tubravitch, covered on its exterior flank by the 4th mountain brigade at Iagoditch.

In brief, during this five day period (10th-15th of November) the Austro-Hungarian Army had effected a very substantial advance, especially on its left. But its adversary had skillfully slipped away. It was determined to make another fight. Already one of the results which the Serbian command had counted upon had been achieved. The Austrians had moved away from their bases. They were commencing to suffer from lack of provisions. Rationing was accomplished with difficulty, especially for the troops which were operating in the mountainous country. The zeal of Potiorek to gain a decisive victory was now redoubled by his desire to seize the Obrenovats-Lazerevats-Valievo railroad which would per-

mit him to successfully solve the problem of supply.

Also, the Commander-in-Chief of the Balkan Armies had been making arrangements since the 16th of November for a concerted action against the adversary who seemed to have decided to accept another battle.

His initial orders can be summarized as follows:

The Fifth Army would attack on its entire front to gain the heights on the east bank of the Koloubara from the junction of the Lygne to the Sava.

In the Sixth Army, the XIII Corps would support the attack of the Fifth Army by attacking the heights which dominated the right bank of the lower Lygne, while the remainder of the Sixth Army (XV and XVI Corps) would be concentrated in the vicinity of Valievo to rest while waiting for the situation to be clarified.

II. The Beginning of the Battle of the Koloubara. (17th-22nd November, 1914)

The day of the 17th of November, was utilized by the Austrians in gaining contact with the hostile position, and by the Serbians in consolidating their defense.

The Fifth Army attempted with its four deployed divisions to gain a foothold on the eastern bank of the Koloubara. Only the 21st Division (VIII Corps) succeeded in occupying a wooded area west of Lazarevats in front of the Serbian defensive position. Everywhere else the Austrians were unable to force the obstacle which covered the front of the hostile advance elements.

As for the Sixth Army, the two divisions of the XIII Corps, crossed the Koloubara without difficulty, the 36th at Slovats, the 42nd at Divtci. The XV and XVI Corps concentrated themselves to sending patrols toward the south to reconnoiter the ridge line which separated the valley of the western Morava from that of the Koloubara and to determine the disposition of the hostile left.

On the Serbian side, the two armies on the right, Second and Third, while easily resisting the first attempts of the enemy, continued to organize their positions.

We have already described the assignment of sectors to the three divisions of the Second Army, and in a similar manner the establishment of the Third Army on the front Tchowska-Katcher River with three divisions in the front line (Drina 2nd, Combined 1st, and Drina 1st.) and one division in army reserve (Timok 2nd).

The First Army, thanks to the help of the XV and XVI Austrian Corps in the vicinity of Valievo, was able to quietly complete its installation on its position which was occupied in the following manner:

In the Goukochi Sector, the Morava 2nd Ban Division supported on its left by a regiment of the Danube 1st Ban Division. The remainder of this division constituted the Army reserve.

The Danube 2nd Ban Division occupied the front Batchinats-Ruda, covered on its right by the Rogatchitsa detachment and on its left, on Mount Maljen (997) by a detachment which protected the extreme left of the Army (Maljen Detachment).

In short, the First Army facing toward the north west, formed two groups, the first of which closed the road Slovats-Goukochi-Gorgny-Milanovats, and the second the road from Divtci to Tchatchak by way of Souvobor and the road from Valievo to Pozega by way of Mount Maljen.

On the extreme Serbian left, some small Austrian detachments had crossed the Drina at Rogatchitsa and Baillina Bachta and had commenced to reconnoiter the front of the Oujitse Army.

G H Q was employed during this short period of slight activity in reconstituting effectives and increasing, as much as possible, the armament of the troops. It issued a directive to the armies explaining in concise terms that during the defensive action it was necessary to keep in hand powerful reserves with a view to breaking up enemy attacks by immediate counter-attacks. These instructions took especial pains to point out that in this situation due to the extended front held and the difficulties of transporting troops from one part of the line to another, G H Q could not consider forming

general reserves. It was, therefore, to the armies and divisions that it delegated the responsibility of creating these available reserves.

Let us note, that, finally at the end of a long period of bad weather, the 16th and 17th were pleasant. But during the night of the 17th-18th, rain commenced again and did not stop for several days. In the mountains it snowed hard, and the battle was to be fought on ground covered with one meter of snow. The Koloubara rose and the plain was transformed into a vast morass, which was not displeasing to the Serbians, since the obstacle covering their front was strengthened.

During the day of the 18th of November, the situation of the two adversaries was not essentially changed.

Upon the front of the Fifth Austrian Army, the VIII Corps gained an advantage. Its 21st Division seized Lazarevats without, however, being able to emerge from it, while on its right the 9th Division succeeded in gaining a foothold on the right bank of the Koloubara.

Upon the front of the XIII Corps, (Sixth Army) the Austrians were commencing to seriously threaten, between Dudovitsa and Zupagnats, the southern part of the Tchowska Sector, due to a strong detachment of artillery emplaced near Pepelievats.

In snort, the struggle had now started upon the main defensive position of the Third Serbian Army, while on the flanks, in front of the First and Second Armies the enemy had still only gained contact with the outposts.

On the 19th, with the combined efforts of the 9th and 36th Austrian Divisions, the threat which was directed against the Tchowska Sector was increased. Although the Timok 1st Ban Division succeeded in maintaining the integrity of its position, the Serbian Commander ordered the movement forward to this part of the front of the Timok 2nd Ban Division (Reserve of Third Army.)

On the Austrian right flank the XV and XVI Corps still remained in the vicinity of Valievo. The XV Corps methodically commenced its deployment by moving its 48th Division on Mionitsa, its 1st Division on Tserovobrd and an advance guard of this corps succeeded in gaining a foothold on Mount Batchinats (700) which a counter attack of the Danube 2nd Ban⁶⁹

Division partially re-gained.

The Commander of the Oujitse Army formed a detachment at Kossieritchi, charged with attacking enemy elements located in the vicinity of Taor (Steep Valley of the Duboritsa).

On the 20th of November Austrian activity developed along the entire front of their Sixth Army.

The left wing (XIII Corps) was now entirely engaged, while the 36th division continued to exert pressure against the Serbians on the lower part of the Lygne from Doudovitsa to Zou-pagnats, without success, however. The 42nd Division drove back the Serbian outposts at Milovats and Topalskobrdo (840) which our allies failed to regain.

But, the Danube 2nd Ban Division on the left of the First Army, recaptured Batchinats in a vigorous counter-attack which drove the enemy beyond the Ribnitsa River. General Potiorek, estimating that the Serbian left was now determined with sufficient accuracy, gave orders to the XV Corps to attack the next day, the 21st, with its three divisions--the 48th by way of Mionitsa and Gorgny-Toplitsa on the front--Batchinats (700), Mednik (480), the 1st Division by way of Tserovobrdo and Bredje on Rude (662) and Kik(712), the 40th Division moving to Corgny Toplitsa following the 48th. As for the XVI it was to hold itself ready to march at an instant's notice. Also on the 21st of November all interest in the battle was concentrated on that part of the area which extended from Lazarevats to Mount Maljen.

South of Lazarevats, the Morava 1st Ban Division, supported by the Timok 2nd Ban Division forced the right of the VIII Austrian Corps to hastily assume the defensive.

On the front of the XIII Corps some enemy battalions which had succeeded in crossing the Lygne at Doudovitsa were immediately thrown back.

But on the front of the First Serbian Army, the situation had become grave. Since morning our allies had noticed the concentration of important forces which were slowly approaching the position held by the Morava 2nd Ban, the Danube 1st Ban and the Danube 2nd Ban Divisions. This concentration was the XV Austrian Corps. During the afternoon a coordinated enemy attack

was launched on the front Medik-Batchinats-Ruda. The 48th Austrian Division reinforced by a brigade of the 40th, was held up in front of Mednik, but the 1st Division recaptured Batchinats and seized Ruda. Counter-attacks launched by the Serbians failed due to lack of artillery support.

The Commander of the First Army, General Michitch, having no more reserves at his disposal, seeing the serious threat directed at his left flank and knowing the state of fatigue of his troops decided to withdraw his forces to a position extending along Souvobor (802)-Railats-Postrouja (hills 646-675). Contact between this new front and the part not affected by the withdrawal was made near Goukochi by the Bukua Ridge (552) and hill 675.

This decision, approved by Serbian G H Q caused the latter to redispense some of the forces on the left wing.

The Timok 2nd Ban Division, reserve of the Third Army which, as we have seen, was engaged on this same day in support of the Morava 1st Ban Division was to replace the Drina 1st Ban Division in the Moravitsi Sector. The Drina 1st Ban was then to pass to the control of the First Army, of which it would form the right, by replacing the Morava 2nd Ban in the Goukochi Sector. The Morava 2nd Ban was likewise to move over to its left and take over the front Bukva-hill 675. The front Postrouja-Railats-Chilyak was to be assigned to the Danube 1st Ban, while the Danube 2nd Ban was to hold the Chilyak-Igritché Sector, being covered on its left by the Maljen detachment which remained in position.

The 22nd of November was used by the Serbians in the occupation of their new positions and the rather complicated movements which we have just enumerated. As for the Austrians, while continuing their attacks on the front of the Koloubara and the Lygne, they devoted the day to regaining contact with the First Serbian Army and to deploying their XVI Corps.

From north to south their situation may be summarized as follows:

Fifth Army: the 104th Landstrum Brigade was still halted at the junction of the Koloubara where the Obrenovats detachment stopped in crossing.

The 29th Division had succeeded in forcing the Loukavitsa which parallels the course of the Koloubara and was attacking in two groups, one at Konatitse and the other at Stepoiewats. It was held in check by the division of Serbian cavalry.

The 7th division was conducting a successful action in the vicinity of Vtsryleni.

• The VIII Corps was being violently attacked by the Serbians in the Lazarevats sector. It had suffered severe losses and gave indications of exhaustion.

Sixth Army: the XIII Corps is likewise paralyzed by the energetic resistance of its adversary upon the Lygne.

In the XV Corps, the 48th Division held Batchinats and Mednik while the 48th Division was approaching Chilyak.

Finally, in the XVI Corps, the Combined Division had been moved on Maljen where it was halted by the strong detachment which defended this pivotal point. The 50th Division had extended out toward Brejdje in contact with the XV Corps. The 18th Division by a forced march had arrived at nightfall at Buchovska Planina, widely overlapping the Serbian left wing of the Serbian First Army. The 4th Mountain Brigade, attacked Varda, without success, however.

In brief, during this phase which constituted the commencement of the battle, General Potiorek had played, so to speak, a classical game. After gaining contact with the opposing army along its entire front, he deployed his reserves on his right wing. If he succeeded--and he might hope to, by reason of the powerful means at his disposal--he would open with a powerful force the valley of the west Morava behind the enemy's left wing and cut off the Serbian Army from its communications with the Serbian metropolis, while driving it toward the Danube.

The Serbian command did not have, for the time being, its full strategical freedom of action. It had only, been able to select a front upon which it had accepted battle upon which it had engaged all its forces. This front, however skillfully it might have been selected presented one weak point. This was its flank, which was exposed to an attack or a turning movement, the more so since it was in front of this flank that the enemy reserves72

had just been deployed.

Conscious of this danger, the Serbian G H Q instructed, on the evening of the 22nd, the Second and Third Armies as well as the Oujitse Army to prepare an energetic offensive, in which they could expect the assistance of the First Army.

In the respective situations of the two adversaries, such an order seemed to indicate desire rather than reality and to arouse hope in the heart of the soldiers.

If, indeed, the Serbians immediately started the execution of this counter-attack, they would hurl themselves from the very start against the Koloubara and the Lygne. The obstacle which had up until now protected their front would immediately be converted into an obstacle which covered the enemy's front. This consideration probably contributed to influence Serbian G H Q to wait some days and to gain maneuver space east of the Koloubara, as we shall see further on, before initiating the offensive announced in the orders of November 22nd.

It is also true that the idea of taking the offensive with an exhausted army, extended over a very wide front, without having time to regroup fresh troops, might be considered a rash undertaking, even fantastical. But this second objection is not of great weight as the sequence of this recital will show.

III. The Decisive Phase of the Battle. The Final Withdrawal (The evacuation of Belgrade, Souvobor and Oujitse)

Now certain that the Serbians had resolved to accept battle, and believing he had fixed them in position, General Potiorek made his disposition to bring to a conclusion the maneuver he had fortunately conceived during the preceding days.

The orders which he gave on the 22nd for the following days may be summarized as follows:

In the center the XIII and XV Corps would continue their efforts upon the Lygne.

On the right, the XVI Corps would move its mass by way of Souvobar upon G.Milanovats,

while the 18th Division would move by Kossieritchi on Oujitse to be in position to move up the valley of the West Morava.

On the left, the Combined Corps reinforced by a brigade of the 36th Division (from the XIII Corps) would penetrate the Serbian front and attack to the south in order to force the enemy to withdraw from the vicinity of Lazarevats where, the VIII Corps, as we have just seen, was in a dangerous position.

The battle was then resumed on the 23rd. Actually it was on this day that the battle really commenced.

The 29th Austrian Division reinforced by the 71st Brigade (from the 36th Division) vainly tried to advance on the front, Konatitse-hill 147, which the Serbian cavalry division successfully held. On its right the 7th division and farther to the south, the VIII, the XIII and the XV Corps did not gain any advantage.

The XVI Corps was engaged in violent combat at Souvobor. Its right appeared to be in possession of Mount Maljen, and on its extreme right the 18th Division advanced from Bouchovska Planina and attacked the Kossieritchi detachment spread out on the front-Kossomor (1034)-Radinovtsi-Paramoun(853), separating it from its base at Kossomor.

During the next day this battle was carried on without much change.

Serbian G H Q confined itself to reinforcing the cavalry division, struggling against a corps which it had successfully resisted up until now, with a regiment taken from the defense of Belgrade.

The Second Serbian Army while resisting violent attacks in the vicinity of Volouyak and Tchowska, expedited its offensive preparations.

On the 25th, the Austrians gained two notable advantages.

In the center, the 9th Division captured Petka (Southwest of Lazarevats) and this advance forced the Morava 1st Ban division to evacuate the Tchowska Salient. This withdrawal caused a retirement of about three kilometers by the Timok 1st Ban Division, which went back to the line, Dren-Glavitsa,

and the right of the Third Army had to adjust itself to the new position of the Morava 1st Ban.

To the south, the Austrians succeeded in holding Mount Maljen in spite of the efforts of the Serbians, and still more important, they seized Mount Bukva (552).

Finally, on the extreme right, the 18th Division was halted before Glogovats, while the 4th Mountain Brigade attacked Verda without success.

During the day of the 25th, the most critical event for the Serbians was the capture of Mount Maljen by the Austrians, from which they threatened the communications of the Oujitse Army. However, on the next day, the following events transpired. The Serbians checked the enemy by a vigorous counter-attack near Konatitse. They drove back six battalions of the 42nd Division which had succeeded in forcing the Lygne. On the front of the First Serbian Army, General Michitch ordered his troops to hold at all costs in spite of the enemy and in spite of the snow which had been falling abundantly for two days. The Oujitse Army commenced an important and successful action.

Abandoning Oujitse and Pozega to the enemy this army had established itself west of Tchatchak on the heights overlooking the defile between Kablar (875) and Ovtchar (998), where it could defend the narrow Valley of the West Morava.

Serbian G H Q still had the hope and the will to retake the offensive. In these circumstances, an attack conducted by the Second and Third Armies would probably result in relieving the First Army from the increasingly critical position in which it found itself. But we have outlined the reasons which influenced the Serbian Commander before gaining maneuver space, regrouping his forces and shortening his front.

A new withdrawal would result in the evacuation of Belgrade and the abandonment to the enemy of the valuable railroad through Obrenovats-Lazarevats-Valievo, which Potiorek was anxious to make his line of communication.

After having weighted the advantages and the disadvantages of this decision, Serbian G H Q specified that the Armies would effect

the following dispositions:

The "Defense of Belgrade" was to be established on the extreme right on the front Varovnitza-Kochutitsa-Kosmai, prolonged to its left by the Obrenovats Detachment north of Sibnitsa. The Obrenovats Detachment came under the control of the Commander of the "Defense of Belgrade."

The Second and Third Armies were to fall back on a position along the road from Belgrade to G. Milanovats, and Sibnitsa to Golubats.

At this last point the front was to connect with the First Army which was to remain on its present position:--Postrouja-Railats-Souvobor-Babina-Clava.

On the extreme left of the line, the Oujitse Army, facing to the west would hold the Kabla-Outchar defile and Gojna-Gora which controlled the road from Pozega to G Milanovats.

During the 27th and 28th of November, the battle proceeded furiously, but with varying degrees of success at the two extremities of the theater of the struggle.

On the northern part, the Fifth Austrian Army marked time and in some places, even withdrew. In front of it the activity of the Serbians was intensified and they obviously gained the ascendancy. The Obrenovats detachment recaptured the main position, temporarily lost. The cavalry division attacked hill 147 (north of Stepoievats) and captured a thousand prisoners. The right wing of the Choumadia 1st Ban Division forced the enemy back to the village of V. Tsrelyeni. Finally the Timok 1st Ban Division pushed back the Austrians as far as Lazarevats, captured Bourovo, then returned to their position.

But, on the other hand, the Sixth Austrian Army compensated for the failure of the Fifth Army with important gains.

The VIII Corps captured Barlilovitsa and Zakinats on the right bank of the Lygne on both sides of Dudovitsa. The XV Corps took Moravtsi which the Serbians had just evacuated. The XVI Corps, in a furious action which was extended into the night of the 28th succeeded in driving the Serbians from Chilyak (856) and Babinaglava, which indicated their intention of overrunning, from the west, Souvobor, to which

the Danube 2nd Ban Division was desperately clinging.

Finally, on the southern extremity of the battle field, the 18th Division, moving from Kossieritchi, pursued to rear guard of the Oujitse Army, entered Bredjatsi, then Zaititcha, trying to open up the road from Gorgny Milanovats, while on its right the 4th Mountain Brigade arrived at Oujitse which had been abandoned by the Serbians.

In short, the front of the Third Serbian Army had been penetrated in several localities and it did not appear to be in a condition to restore a hopelessly compromised situation. Also G H Q gave the order to withdraw to the new position we have described above.

As for the First Army, it was in a still more critical state. The Drina Division, 1st Ban, having no more ammunition, and each battalion reduced to the strength of a company, was compelled to abandon, during the night of the 28th, the area near Dichta Glavitsa and retire on Golubats. On the left, the Morava 2nd Ban Division had held, but it was finally compelled to withdraw by the retirement of the Drina 1st Ban Division.

The group at Souvobor (Danube 1st Ban and Danube 2nd Ban) also had maintained its position. But the troops had been fighting in the snow several days and following the practice in use at this time in the Serbian Army, all effectives were in line which made rest by relief impossible. Also these units had reached the extreme limit of their strength.

The Commander of the First Serbian Army, General Michitch, considering the withdrawal on his right, the threat impending on his left, and the condition of his troops, estimated that if he persisted in fighting in place, he might, perhaps, be unable to avoid a catastrophe. He took the responsibility of abandoning his position at 4:00 A.M. on the 29th of November and withdrawing his army to a line in prolongation of the north-south line upon which the Second and Third Armies were going to take up a position. This line extended along Lipet-Golubat, Nakutchani, and Takovo, where it rested on the hill mass of Samedraj, which dominated the G. Milanovats to the west.

The initiative exercised by General Michitch had a double advantage:

By breaking contact with the enemy he gave his troops a slight period of rest for which they were in urgent need, and he gained in the fertile region of G. Milanovats easier living conditions than they had been enduring for two weeks. By forcing the enemy to follow him, he compelled him to lengthen his lines of supply in a desolate country. In a word, he reversed roles, taking the better for himself.

In fact, while this decision was perfectly justified, it did expose the Oujitse Army whose right was again uncovered.

G H Q then intervened. After having approved the measures taken by General Michitch, it ordered the Oujitse Army to withdraw on the front:-Drenovats-Galitch, while clinging onto the Kablar-Ovtchar defile.

On the 29th of November, the Third and First Armies and the Oujitse Army executed their withdrawal; the Third aligning itself on the front Vagagne-Golubats; the First from this point to Takouo; the Oujitse Army in a half circle from Glavitsa to Kablar. The movement was executed under the protection of strong rear guards which concealed the withdrawal from the position to the enemy, then delayed him, thus giving the armies time to steal away and organize on their new positions. In fact, the Austrians advanced slowly during the course of the day and reached Parlog-Poniatitse-Dichta-Glavitsa, Railats-Souvobor and the front of the Oujitse Army, Goinagora and Spredna Dobregna.

The Second Army remained during the day on their position. But in view of the imminent withdrawal of the Obrenovats detachment G H Q sent orders to evacuate Belgrade. On the 30th of November the general withdrawal of the Serbian forces was effected without difficulty.

The troops composing the Defense of Belgrade commenced their movement in the morning and occupied the position defined by Hill 325-Varovnitza-Michlyevats (north of Mount Kosmai). The "Obrenovats Detachment" attached to the command of the "Defense of Belgrade" took position on the line; Hill 260-Hill 261 (Sibnitza Salient) connecting with the Second Army near Medvedgniak.

The Second Army aligned itself facing west on the front Medvedgniak-Vagagne-hill 446.

The Third Army extended from Hill 603 where it connected with the First Army, whose left,

as we have stated, extended to Glaitsa, in contact with the Oujitse Army.

This unexpected withdrawal pleased the Commander of the Austro-Hungarian forces.

To be sure, the enemy had retired rapidly with material loss. Victory was not yet achieved, but one could see it approaching. Indeed, it would be welcome because, General Potiorek had become aware of the fact that the corps of his right army, the best, were extremely tired, while those of the Fifth Army were giving evidence of a growing lack of energy. But he was compelled to admit that his opponents had themselves arrived to the extreme limit of their resistance. What tended to prove it was this withdrawal, the fourth since the commencement of the offensive upon the Drina. And this new withdrawal had the immediate result of exposing the capital of Serbia to imminent capture. It is, indeed, important to note that the Austrian Commander-in-Chief ignored at this time the fact that the Serbians, in renouncing the defense of Belgrade, had withdrawn their right about thirty kilometers south of this city.

Potiorek believed that the opposing army intended to organize along the line which covered Gorgny-Milanovats,--Arandjelovats and probably Belgrade.

The situation as he conceived it, led him to extend his front to the north, and to push forward his left in order to seize Belgrade with more delay. But as his reserves had long since been engaged, such an extension of his line could be accomplished, only, by a general weakening of his front.

The orders which he issued on the 30th of November accomplished this effect.

The "Combined Corps" was to face to the northeast and occupy with its advanced elements, Ostroujnitsa-(upon the south bank of the Sava), Petrovgrob-Lyuta Strana-Partsani in order to start the attack on Belgrade.

The VIII Corps pushed forward its 21st Division into the corridor formed by the Bielanitsa and the Turia and its 9th Division between the Turia and the road from Lazarevats to Arandjelovats.

The XIII Corps advanced south of this road, its right near Parlog.

The XV Corps marched on the line Parlog-Lipet.

The XVI Corps moved south of the Chtavitsa River with its leading elements on the line Goloubats (496), Vranovitsa-Galitch, leaving its 18th Division in front of the Oujitse Army.

These, orders, as we can see, extended the front of the Fifth Army by about twenty kilometers. This disposition was manifestly made to capture Belgrade in the shortest time. The fall of this political objective would have considerable effect. It was justified by the state of fatigue in which they considered the Serbian Army to be, a hypothesis which should have permitted boldness and even rashness.

Just there was the danger. From the opinion of all those who were the actors in this drama, the period from the 22nd to the 28th of November which we have just covered, cost the Austrians more dearly than the Serbians and wore them out more.

We have seen that the Serbian command had been watching several days for the opportunity to retake the offensive. It had just regrouped its forces at the time when Potiorek, now having the Koloubara behind him, unwisely dispersed his.

While the Commander of the "Army of the Balkans" thought he was on the eve of a brilliant victory, the threat of an approaching catastrophe, which was to annihilate his forces in less than two weeks, was hovering over him.

It is the recital of this overwhelming reversal of fortune that now remains for us to outline.

IV. The Serbian Offensive The Austro-Hungarian Defeat (Sketch 7) (2nd-15th December, 1914)

On the 1st of December the Fifth Austrian Army started the movements prescribed for it on the previous day and which were to direct it on Belgrade while permitting it to commence

the envelopment of the Serbian right wing with which contact had been lost since the 30th of November. The Combined Corps moved forward in three columns:--the 104th Landstrum Brigade along the south bank of the Sava towards Ostroujnitsa; the 29th Division parallel to the Valley of the Maritsa towards V. Melyak; the 7th Division moving up the Belianitsa towards Belyina. At the same time, a detachment called "The Peterwardein," composed of nine battalions, one battery and one squadron, assembled north of Belgrade, prepared to cross the Sava in order to cooperate in the capture of the capital.

From observation made from the north banks of the Sava and the Danube, the Austrians concluded that Belgrade had possibly been evacuated. During the night of the 1st-2nd, reconnaissance detachments crossed the Sava, gained a foothold on the south bank and confirmed this information.

The VIII Corps, in the meantime, advanced with its two divisions between Belianitsa and Pechtau without meeting resistance.

In the Sixth Army, while the left Corps (XIII) was moving forward, extending its left towards the Lazarevats-Arandjelovats road to maintain liaison with the Fifth Army, whose corps were obliquing toward the northeast, the XV Corps was engaged in severe fighting with the Serbian rear guards to obtain its objectives, Lipet and Golubats, and the XVI Corps was advancing in the general direction of G. Milanovats slowly driving before it the rear elements of the First Army.

The 1st of December was utilized by the Serbian troops to obtain rest and to reorganize their units. In particular, the First Army was quickly taken in hand and its Commander, General Michitch, without losing an instant, made his disposition to attack the enemy at the moment he debauched from the mountainous area.

The hazardous movement to the north by the Austrians in front of the center of the Serbian right wing had not escaped the attention of the Commander-in-Chief, who also gained an impression of the state of physical fatigue and moral depression from prisoners captured during the preceding days.

On the 2nd of December, the movement commenced by the Austrians was continued without hindrance. The "Peterwardein Detachment" entered Belgrade. The Combined Corps gained the front which had been assigned to it on the 30th of November (Petrovgrob-Liuta-Strana), supported on its right by the VIII Corps, the left division (21st) of which had arrived at Manitch. The right Division (9th) advanced in the interval between Turia and Petchau.

The Sixth Army now had its right (XIII Corps) resting on the Lazarevats-Arandjelovats road, and its two right corps (XV and XVI) having gained Lipet and Golubats, had regained direct contact with the Third and First Serbian Armies.

For the major portion of the Serbian forces the 2nd of December was a day of rest, the last before the intense effort which was to be demanded of them.

Indeed, this was the day on which G H Q issued the order for a general attack on the next morning.

The plan for this counter-attack was simple.

While the "Belgrade Defense" remained in position on both sides of Mount Kosaai, to cover from the north the flank and rear of the forces which were to make the attack, the Second, Third and First Armies as well as the Oujitse Army were to attack straight to their front, moving forward from the defensive positions which they had taken up without attempting to reconstitute reserves other than those which they had been able to form, and without an artillery preparation due to the lack of ammunition.

It was designed, in brief, to take advantage, by a surprise attack, of the error which the enemy had just committed by extending his left flank into the air about twenty kilometers north of the right of General Stepanovitch. The surprise and the vigor of this offensive would be the essential elements of success. As General Joffre had written on the eve of the battle of the Marne, to which the Serbians compare their victory of the Koloubara, the watchword was "strike now."

The time for this offensive, which was to decide the fate of the Serbians, was exceptionally well selected.

In effect, the dispositions decided on by General Potiorek on the 3rd of December were to accentuate the separation of his two armies.

Immediately after the capture of Belgrade the Commander of the Fifth Army received the order to insure its possession and to assemble his forces south of the city with a view to making an offensive from north to south in the direction of Arandjelovats. During this time the Sixth Army was struggling with the Serbian Armies while continuing its movement to gain Aranjelovats and G. Milanovats.

As a result, the following orders were given for the 3rd of December by General Franck, Commander of the Fifth Army.

The 104th Landstrum Brigade and the "Peterwardein Detachment" will assemble in the vicinity of Belgrade to insure its immediate defense.

The Combined Corps will move its 29th Division on Avala and the 7th on Ripagne.

The VIII Corps will direct its 21st Division on Partsani and the 9th upon Bojdarevats.

But on the morning of the 3rd, the Serbian offensive was launched and surprised the enemy in the very act.

The troops had just received a proclamation from King Peter I. "His Majesty the King, full of admiration for their superhuman efforts and bowing down in respect to the numerous victims who have fallen in the ranks of our army, sends to all the officers, non-commissioned officers, corporals, and soldiers his sincerest thanks, firmly convinced that they will persevere in their heroic defense of their country, that they will persevere the Honor, Glory, Name, and Existence of Serbia, and that they will consent to the supreme sacrifice on the sacred altar of unified Serbia, leaving to future generations the example of an absolute sacrifice. In extending sincerest wishes for the prosperity of the Serbian Army, His Majesty the King, salutes his heroes with the conviction that God will grant us victory."

And the old Sovereign came to the front of the Second Army, visited the troops, and witnessed from the vicinity of Vagagne the beginning of the offensive.

This emotional appeal awoke in the Serbian ranks the "Spirit of Sacrifice" and faith in the destiny of the country. The old soldiers of Koumanovo, Monastir, and Tser, forgetting their misery, attacked with an enthusiasm and a vigor with which they would not have believed themselves capable a few days previously.

The Second Army commenced its attack at 10:00 A.M. and struck the VIII corps which had just commenced its dangerous approach march to the northeast. The enemy was completely surprised and driven back. Slatina, Arapovats, Barochavats, Bistritchi-viss fell into the hands of General Stepan Stepanovitch's soldiers, who in a first dash into the enemy lines penetrated to a depth of ten kilometers.

At the same time, the Third Army attacked with equal success. Capturing, in spite of the resistance stubbornly offered by the enemy, Mt. Vrailia and Lipet.

The First Army and the Oujitse Army had got under way at 7:00 AM.

In spite of the small number of effectives at their disposal (about one-half of their original strength), in spite of the rigorous defense of the Austrians, the troops of General Michitch captured Vranovitsa, Roustitchi, Branetitch and approached Kremene.

As for the Oujitse Army, it gained at the end of the day the church at Pragnany, Rouevitsa (583), Godun (714) and Orouievitsa.

This first and glorious day of attack gave the Serbians success along their entire front and allowed numerous trophies, prisoners and material to fall into their hands.

On the 4th of December the Serbian attack increased.

The Second Army continued its effort with a view to driving the enemy beyond the Koloubara. The cavalry division moved in the direction of Slatina - Belyina. The Choumadia-1st Ban Division, advancing in the direction of Sakoulye,

captured at the point of the bayonet bill 187 and the Arapouats Ridge. The Timok-1st Ban Division struck on the Dren-Glavitsa front in an attack against the XIII Corps which it promptly forced to assume the defensive. The Morava-1st Ban Division attacked Kremenitsa which the enemy succeeded in holding.

The Third Army advanced between the Ogneg and Katcher Rivers, gradually driving back the XV Corps.

But a more marked success was gained on the front of the First Army, which made its main efforts on its center and left, dislodged the XVI Corps from its position and drove it back in disorder toward Souvobor.

General Potiorek, anxious at the turn of events on the front of his Sixth Army, hoped that the action of the Fifth to the south would quickly remedy the situation. Unfortunately, the VIII Corps engaged along its entire front against the right of the Second Serbian Army was unable to assemble at the point which had been designated for it in the vicinity of Ripagne where there was also, very slowly assembling, the lone combined corps.

On the next day, the 5th of December, the success of the First Army was assured. It reached the line Goloubats, Postrouja, Raillats, Souvobor. The XVI Corps, driven out of this strong position, where it left some material and prisoners in the hands of the Serbians, attempted to reestablish itself on the line Goukocki, Batchinats, Rouda and Ielyak, but it was ejected from this on the 6th and it hastily took shelter behind the Koloubara.

The disaster of the XVI corps naturally forced the retirement of the XV Corps which also hastened to locate itself behind the barrier of the river.

The clean cut success of General Michitch's troops, whose leading elements arrived at Mionitsa on the 6th, was felt on the extreme Serbian left, where the Oujitse Army observed the decreasing resistance of the 18th Division and on the evening of the 6th moved forward to Zeleni Breg, Zaititscha and the edge of Pozega.

During the 5th and 6th the Situation on the rest of the front was not materially changed.

The Second and Third Serbian Armies gradually advanced toward the Koloubara.

In the Northern part of the theater of operations, the "combined" Austro-Hungarian Corps utilized all day of the 5th to prepare its attack in the direction of Kosmai which it launched on the 6th, so ineffectively however, that it was easily checked by the troops of the "Defense of Belgrade". If the rigorous offensive of the Second Army had prevented the VIII Corps from accomplishing the mission which had been assigned to it, it is difficult to explain why the Fifth Army devoted three days to become engaged with the covering force on the Serbian right flank, when only rapid and energetic activity in this region could avert imminent disaster to the Sixth Army.

However, the Serbian Command very correctly estimated the danger. That is, a serious attack on its right wing might force the withdrawal of its forces engaged in the valley of the Koloubara. It withdrew, during the night of the 5th and 6th of December, the Timok-1st Ban Division from the front of the Second Army and moved it on Mladenovats to reinforce the front of the "Defense of Belgrade."

Having taken these wise precautionary measures, Serbian GHQ decided to exploit the brilliant prospects which the success of the First Army had just opened and on the 7th of December issued the following orders:

The Second Army will remain for the present in position, prepared to resume the offensive immediately when the order is given.

The Third Army will continue its attack in the direction of Tchowska.

The First Army will expedite its pursuit towards Valievo. The Oujitse Army, taking advantage of the enemy's withdrawal, will advance rapidly within its zone on Kossieritchi Razana and Oujitse.

In the execution of this order, the Serbian Armies, with the exception of the Second which formed the pivot, continued their vigorous offensive on the 7th of December.

The Third Army gained possession of the right bank of the Lygne as far as Zoupagnats. The First secured Belastena, Klintsi, and Stajara and its advance guards cleared out the terrain

on the right bank of the Koloubara. Finally, the Oujitse Army reached Rossitchi, Glogovats and the outskirts of Oujitse.

The Austro-Hungarian forces on the 7th of December were disposed as follows:

The XVI Corps had halted with its mass on the left bank of the Koloubara; the "Combined" Division in the vicinity of Dutci; the 50th on the heights northwest and west of Valievo; the 18th Division was hurrying along on the road from Razana to Valievo. The state of demoralization in this corps and the losses it had just suffered during the disorderly retreat which it had made in the past four days, allowed us to consider it as practically out of the battle.

The XV Corps, which had endured less, likewise held the left bank of the Koloubara, from the edge of Slovats to the mouth of the Lygne.

The XIII Corps still held the right bank of the Koloubara. Its front extending from Zoopagnats to Bourovo, covered, at a short distance, the important center of Lazarevats.

The VIII Corps, located north of the Petchau River on the line; Vreoci, Arapovats, Slatina maintained, rather poorly, contact between the Sixth Army and the "Combined" Corps which continued, without result, its attack against the "Defense of Belgrade," in the area north of Kosmai in which it had been moving around for the past five days.

Summing up, the Austro-Hungarian left had been successfully held up by the "Defense of Belgrade." The Second Army in the center maintained itself on the right bank of the Koloubara with difficulty. The right gave unmistakable signs of an approaching breakdown.

This situation was aggravated on the 8th of December.

On that date the Serbians entered Oujitse, and the army of General Michitch arrived by dark at Valievo beyond which it moved for a considerable distance. It took up a position with three divisions (Drina-I, Danube-II and Danube-I) north of the city, holding the Morava-II in rear army reserve.

The XV Corps was maintaining with difficulty on the right bank of the Koloubara, a bridge-head south of Slouats. But under the pressure of its adversary it gave it up and during the night of the 7th and 8th its last elements succeeded in crossing to the left bank of the river.

The XIII Corps attacked with equal violence and threatened with the loss of Lazarevats also gave up prolonging the struggle with a river at its back and during the night withdrew behind the Koloubara. In the northern part of the battle field the situation remained practically unchanged.

The VIII Corps, fixed by the attacks of the Choumadia-1st Ban Division and the Cavalry Division was unable to be of any assistance to the "Combined" Corps, which was now energetically attacking with its 7th Division toward Kosmai and its 29th Division toward Varounitsa. Kosmai was captured by the Austrians but was immediately regained by a powerful counter attack.

In spite of the fact that the positions of the Serbian troops, covering the left flank, had been completely maintained during the day, GHQ as a measure of precaution, withdrew a new division, the Morava-1st Ban, from the front of the Second Army and moved it toward Kosmai to reinforce the group comprising the "Defense of Belgrade."

It seems to be agreed that during the day of December 8th when he learned of the definite retreat of the three right corps behind the Koloubara, General Potiorek believed the battle was lost. But he thought that while it was no longer possible to snatch victory away from his opponents it would, at least, be possible to gain a substantial result which would partially conceal from the eyes of the world the gravity of his defeat. With this intention he decided to organize south of Belgrade a solid front, resting to the east on the Danube near Grodska, and to the west on the Koloubara near Stepoeivats. The occupation of this position, whose organization was immediately begun, would assure the possession of the Serbian Capital, whose capture had been loudly announced several days previously, and would constitute a large open area capable of serving as a base for a subsequent attack. Fate, as we shall see, or as we might better say, the Serbians were to frustrate this plan.

On the 9th of December the First Serbian Army commenced its pursuit north of the Koloubara. On this date the Drina-1st Ban Division had a sharp engagement north of Valievo with the 50th Austrian Division. This was the last action taken by the Sixth army, the remnants of which were slipping away toward the north, leaving in the ruts of the cut up roads its artillery and trains. The destruction was so great that the Serbians limited themselves, at first, to placing on the trail of the fugitives small detachments that were not burdened with wheeled transportation.

The remnants of the XVI Corps were fleeing with the major part toward Chabats by the road from Kotselievo, the remainder by the valley of the Iadar in the direction of Losnitsa or toward Petzka and Zvornik.

The XV Corps was also retreating towards Chabats by way of Oube and Banjani.

The XIII Corps, after making a last stand on the Koloubara in the vicinity of Petka received orders to withdraw along the west bank of the river to the line, Pi Roman Lissopolje where it came under the control of the commander of the Fifth Army.

The Fifth Army now attacked with vigor the Serbian northern front which offered an immovable resistance, thanks to the reinforcements which had just been received. The belated Austrian effort in this area stopped, however, that night, as General Potiorek had ordered General Frank to withdraw his army to the position, Grosdka, Partsani, Stepoievats, which we mentioned above.

The problem which was presented to the Serbian Command at this time was simple. It proceeded to attack the Fifth Army before it had time to organize in the area south of Belgrade. At the same time it took steps to complete the destruction of the Sixth Army, and to completely clear northwestern Serbia of the elements of the enemy which were still hanging on there.

The Serbian GHQ issued, as a consequence, on the 10th of December the following orders which reflect the ideas we have just indicated.

In front of the Fifth Austrian Army a powerful group was constituted.

The Second Army, composed of the Timok-1st Ban Division, the Choumadia-1st Ban Division, the Obrenovats Detachment, and part of the group composing the "Defense of Belgrade," which was fighting in the vicinity of Kosmai, was given the mission of attacking in the direction of Sibnitsa - Baraievo.

On its right the mass of the "Defense of Belgrade" and the Morava-1st Ban Division were charged with moving to the east of the road, - Koviona - Avala - Koumodray.

On the left, the Third Army, with the Drina-2nd Ban Division, the "Combined"-1st Ban Division and the cavalry marched along the right bank of the Koloubara by way of Stepoievats, Melyak and Rouchagne, while the Timok-2nd Ban Division moved on the left bank towards Obrenovats and covered the left flank of the army.

The mission of pursuing the remainder of the Sixth Army was assigned to the First Army and the Oujitse Army, the latter continuing its march toward the upper Drina in the direction of Rogatchitsa and Baillina Bachta, the former sending its pursuit detachments towards Chabats, Los Nitsa and Petzka.

The pursuit of the Sixth Army which constituted the second part of the program defined by the orders of G.H.Q. was executed without difficulty.

By the 10th the Oujitse Army had completed its mission. It reached Rogatchitsa and Baillina Bachta. On this side, Serbian territory was liberated.

In the First Army the Drina-1st Ban Division took position at Blissanski Vissoi, from which it sent out detachments towards Slatina and Panbou - Kovitsa upon the road from Banjani and towards Slatina and Stolitse in the direction of Chabats. The Danube-2nd Ban Division, assembled between Blissanski Vissoi and Iaoutina directed its pursuit group towards Kamenitsa and the valley of the Iadar (road from Chabats). Finally, the Danube-1st Ban Division sent out two small detachments, one towards Kamenitsa and the valley of the Iadar, and the other on the Stave - Petzka road. The Morava-2nd Ban Division remained at Valievo in army reserve.

The detachments from the First Army sent after the XV and XVI Corps did not encounter any

resistance worthy of the name. These two corps, reduced by two-thirds, arrived at Chabats with difficulty and on the 11th crossed over to the left bank of the Sava.

The other part of the task incumbent upon the Serbian Armies, which consisted of attacking the front of the Fifth Army, was more arduous.

The position upon which the Austrians had retired south of Belgrade rested on the east on the Danube near Mostine and extended through KKaikova Bara, Lipe, Koviona (407) Partsanski Viss (418), Talambass and Stepoievats to the Koloubara. On the right wing (Mostine) was located a mixed detachment under the orders of General Schon. The center (from Kraikova Bara) to Partsanski Viss) was occupied by the "Combined" Corps. On the right wing the VIII Corps held the sector from Talambass to Stepoievats. The XIII Corps, which we have seen was making its withdrawal by the left bank of the Koloubara was marching towards Obrenovats where it crossed to the right bank.

This position was very strong naturally, marked by important localities and ridges which dominated the neighboring country. Its front was covered by two streams, the Rajka in the eastern part and the Beljanica in the western sector. Its flanks were protected by two important water courses, the Danube on the left, the Koloubara on the right. At the outset, it presented a deployment of about fifty kilometers which was certainly extensive for two corps whose effectives had melted away by impressive amounts during the preceding operations, and it can be seen that the reinforcements provided by the XIII Corps would not be of effectual assistance, because it had to provide for protection of the right flank along the Koloubara from Stepoievats to the Sava.

The 10th of December was utilized by the Serbians in executing an approach march which brought them in contact with the new enemy position.

On the 11th they attacked with remarkable spirit.

On the east the "Defense of Belgrade" penetrated the Austrian lines at Straja (292) and threatened Lipa and Raitcha Brdo.

In the center, the Second Army attacked upon the front, Vlalschko Brdo, Hill 316, Talambass and the Timok-1st Ban Division captured Hill 316 from the 21st Austrian Division.

On the west the Third Army advanced rapidly upon the Koloubara upon the front, Piroman, Lissopolye, Stepoievats. The right division of this army, Drina-2nd Ban seized the latter locality, while the left division, Timok-2nd Ban followed, on the west bank of the river, the XIII Corps which finished assembling in the Obrenovats area.

On the 12th the battle was continued south of Belgrade with increasing violence.

On the front of the Second Serbian Army, the Timok-1st Ban Division supported on its left by the Choumadia-1st Ban, exploited its success on Hill 316 and captured Hill 418. The Obrenovats detachment took the Talambass hill mass and Hill 243 north of Guberevci.

The Third Army advanced energetically, while its left division, Timok-2d Ban took Obrenovats after a short engagement. The units engaged on the right bank of the Koloubara, combined 1st Ban and Drina-2d Ban, attacked the Konatitse Stepoievats salient capturing successively, Leskovats, Borak, Hill 259 and Melyak. The cavalry division accentuated this rapid progress by advancing in the direction of Melyak, Mochtanitsa.

Against this violent pressure General Frank, Commander of the Fifth Army, tried to reestablish his VIII Corps on the front, Barajevo, Gunttsatsi, Melyak, while covering his right with the XIII Corps which had taken position at Doubovo Brdo, on the south bank of the Sava.

For its part, Serbian G.H.Q. in order to be in a position to exploit its attacks and to prepare for any eventuality, took advantage of the fact that the First Army had only to complete the cleaning up of the Chabats area. It took away from it the Morava-2d Ban Division, in reserve at Valievo, and moved it to Lazarevats placing it at the disposal of the Third Army.

On the 13th of December the Serbians attacked the second line of defense of the Austrians and penetrated it at several points.

In the east the troops of the "Defense of Belgrade" attacked on the front, Koviona - Kraichova Bara and succeeded in capturing, after severe bayonet fighting, the position defended by the combined corps. The latter withdrew in disorder on Avala leaving in the hands of the Serbians a large number of prisoners.

The Second and Third Army, acting in conjunction, attacked the VIII Corps. In the morning by eleven o'clock the combined Division had captured Tchwetkov Grob (294). During the afternoon, the Choumadia-1st Ban in conjunction with the Drina-2d Ban right division of the Third Army captured Petroin Grob (337). On the extreme left the cavalry division reached the Sava.

General Frank had hoped to reestablish himself on a shorter line extending through Ostro-ujnitsa, Tchwetkov Grob (XIII Corps), Petrov Grob - Avala (combined corps) - Mostine (Schon Detachment). But as we have just seen this scarcely formed hope was immediately disappointed, as the front in question was attacked and broken up before the Austrian troops had been able to firmly establish themselves. In addition the losses sustained by the units of the Fifth Army were such that its commander despaired from this time on of maintaining himself any longer in Serbian territory. He decided to bring back the remainder of his army to the bridgehead which covered the immediate outskirts of Belgrade, along Banovo Brdo, Dedinje, Erkmelouk, Militch-evo Brdo. It was only a question of insuring, under the best available conditions, the evacuation of material and the wounded that could be moved, then to move as quickly as possible into Hungarian territory.

The 14th was employed, therefore, in moving north of the Sava the remnants of the Austrian Army under the protection of a strong rear guard which occupied the defensive line we have just mentioned. The crossing was continued during the following night. On the morning of the 15th the last Austrian soldiers crossed the river.

For their part, the Serbians utilized the 14th to develop the last enemy position. On the 15th they attacked for the last time but encountered only unorganized soldiers who surrendered without resistance.

At 10:00 A.M. the Cavalry Division entered Belgrade with the first elements. King Peter, the First rode in a carriage into his capital and proceeded to the cathedral to celebrate the victory which freed Serbia for the second time.

At 10:45 A. M. the Austrians blew up the bridges over the Sava.

This magnificent victory left in the hands of the Serbians 270 officers and more than 40,000 men, prisoners, 3 standards, 130 canons, 70 machine guns and an enormous amount of supplies.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the course of this study, the campaign of 1914 on the Serbian front was characterized by two Austro-Hungarian offensives, the first undertaken on the 12th of August, and the second during the early part of September, but only effectively launched on the 6th of November. The two attacks were separated by way of an interlude by two Serbian incursions into Srem and Bosnia.

The first phase was terminated at the end of August by the victory of the Tser won by the Serbian Armies over the Fifth Austro-Hungarian Army and some elements of the Second Army. We drew, at the end of the first part of this study, some conclusions which we will not repeat here.

Possessing more powerful means than the Serbians and, above all, utilizing to the best advantage the resources placed at his disposal, General Potiorek had, at the beginning of the second phase (6-30 November), a series of advantages, which if they had continued, would have probably led to a decisive victory. We have indicated that during this period the Austrian Commander-in-chief, instructed by the costly experience in the month of August maneuvered with method and unmistakable decision.

The Serbian Command, whose forces were clearly inferior in number and above all whose material means were strictly limited, had at its disposition only one possible attitude in the face of the vigorous offensive of its adversary. This was a retrograde movement, which consisted of retiring on successive defensive positions, wearing out the enemy little by little, forcing him to lengthen his lines of communications, and to lead him to a well selected position where a favorable occasion could be seized to retake the initiative of operation. The Serbian maneuver which led to the victory of the Kolubara belongs to the type of "defensive - offensive" battle which Clausewitz recommends to armies

that do not have at the beginning, a marked superiority over their adversaries. In that respect it is similar to the Battle of the Marne, to which the Serbians proudly compared it.

In fact, such a maneuver includes risks which make the execution of it very delicate. It seems not to be out of place to point out some of them in order to show the ability that our Serbian allies possessed to overcome them.

First of all, when a retrograde movement is made, as was the case here, in national territory, each step to the rear yields to the enemy a new piece of the soil of the fatherland. Outside of considerations of morale, which can not be neglected, this abandonment means the loss of valuable resources which are of immediate value to the enemy.

In the case which we are considering we have indicated that the Serbian withdrawal beyond the Koloubara confronted our allies with a formidable problem, since it meant the abandonment of a railway which the enemy used to shorten his lines of communication and the loss of the capital, actually untenable.

On the other hand, if one plans, by a retrograde movement to wear out the enemy, the wearing out process is reciprocal and there is a risk of paying for it at the expense of those who retreat, because their morale is lowered by each withdrawal and because on every position evacuated, wounded men and supplies are left behind which are seized by the enemy. In these losses there is no reciprocation. A firm commander, strict discipline and high morale are indispensable in order not to have a retrograde movement gradually transform itself into a route.

Finally, such a maneuver cannot be continued for a long period of time without danger. It should be conducted with the fixed idea of retaking the offensive as soon as a favorable opportunity arises, or with the idea that such an opportunity will be created. If offensive action is taken prematurely, it fails, and this failure always involves the gravest consequences. If it is prescribed too late it also fails; this time because the offensive capacity of the army has in some manner disappeared and it is not possible to set the machine in motion again. The Russians had that sad experience in their endless retreat of 1915.

The events which we have related show that the Serbian Command knew how to avoid the different dangers which were involved when it committed itself to this maneuver. It gave evidence during this difficult period, of a tenacious will, of keen strategical sense, and absolute confidence in the troops, upon which, in the last analysis, success depends. It is only fair to say here, that in this last decisive phase, the superior command was wonderfully aided by the army commanders, especially General Michitch who earned by his brilliant service as the head of the First Army the honor of later succeeding General Putnik, when the latter, overcome by age and illness had to abandon his duties as chief-of-staff.

As for the Serbian Soldiers, whose magnificent military virtues we have already mentioned in this second phase of the campaign, they surpassed themselves. Marching and fighting without rest in the snow and rain, poorly clothed, poorly fed, insufficiently supported by artillery which the lack of ammunition forced, all too frequently, to remain silent, they justified the confidence of their king and the reputation which they had already acquired in the course of the Balkan Wars. This was a poignant spectacle and one which they were to again exhibit by another example four years later. We see these men having reached the extreme limit of their strength, renew the attack and drive before them the enemy army from the crests of Gorgny - Milanovats to Chabats and from the slopes of Kosmai to Belgrade, retaking in less than two weeks the terrain that the Austrians had taken more than two months to conquer. So it is still true, even in these times when material has assumed such a formidable development, moral strength is preponderant in war.

On the other hand, the sudden collapse of the Austro-Hungarian army, surprised in full offensive action by a sudden counter-attack is a phenomenon which history should record, not as an accident, but as the results of a state of affairs which we already have had occasion to speak of in the course of this recital.

It is proclaiming a well known truth to say that the army is the faithful image of the nation from which it comes. It has its essential traits, its virtues and its faults. Sometimes it accentuates these traits. It is at the same time, the instrument and the expression of its patriotism, its national spirit and aspirations. With a young and vigorous people it is the crucible of their unity. In nations in the process of decay it is more often only the symbol of their ruin. In a period of success, a similar instrument

might conceal the imperfections that it has within itself. But when the hour of great trials strike, this instrument is broken and its parts cannot be reassembled. During the great conflict from which we have emerged, one can say that all the belligerent nations have known these trials which have shaken them to their foundations. Only those people which unity had firmly cemented have overcome them and emerged greater. Serbia is a living example of this fact.

The Austro-Hungarian Army, whose technical value was not noticeably inferior to the best, whose material was excellent, whose leaders were in general very cultivated and well versed in the practice of their profession showed itself incapable of resisting these trials which are the touchstones of strong people. It did not know how to resist them because it was not the image of a nation but the exact representation of a mosaic of divergent nationalities. It is there that we must seek the underlying causes of this defeat which proved in the fifth month of the war the prognostications of those who knowing the Empire on the Danube, predicted its approaching ruin.

The victory of the Koloubara, however, complete it may have been, still left Serbia in a tragic situation.

Certainly, the Austrians had given up for a long time, following this second disaster, any intention of action against her. The Balkan nations which were trying, before committing themselves, to determine on which side they could gain the maximum benefits for the minimum risks incurred, established themselves more resolutely in neutrality. For, in spite of this victory, Serbia, exhausted by the double effort which it had just made, remained facing the Austro-Hungarian Empire, surrounded by enigmatical neutrals, and separated from her allies, not only by immense distances, but especially by the fact that these allies were themselves engaged in operations which absorbed their attention and their resources.

In this month of December 1914, which witnessed the unfolding of the battle of the Koloubara, the armies of Grand Duke Nicholas sank into stabilized warfare, the same as the armies in the west. The Russian left had reached near the crest of the Carpathians, about 550 kilometers, as the crow flies, the closest point of approach to Serbian territory.

We shall not dwell on the different plans which were formed in Russian G.H.Q. during the winter of 1914-15. Suffice it to say, that some, based on the indisputable fact that Germany was the principal adversary of the allies, visualized an offensive in the direction of Berlin, while others, considering the disintegration of Austro-Hungary, planned an operation toward Vienna and Budapest.

This last hypothesis appeared to prevail and even to take concrete form when on the 21st of May 1915 a treaty was signed at Stawka between Italy, which was going to enter the struggle, and Russia.

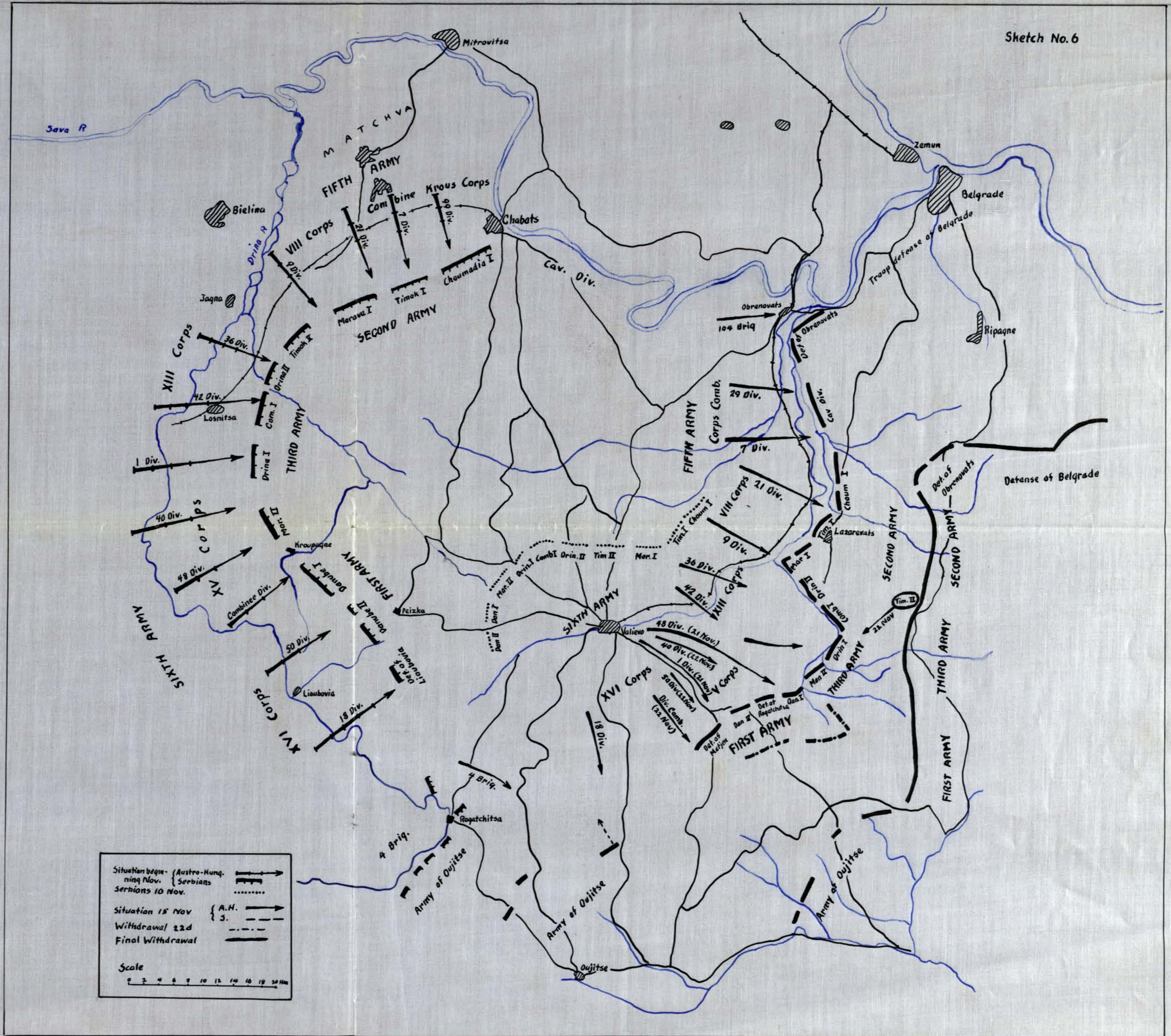
By virtue of this treaty, the common objective of the Russian, Italian and Serbian Armies was to fight the enemy forces engaged in the Austro-Hungarian theater of war. The principal line of Italian operations in accordance with the established plan should be directed toward Laybach which was aimed at Vienna or Budapest. The Serbian Army was to advance to the northwest and meet the Italian Army.

Unfortunately at the moment when this agreement was signed the Russian Army had for twenty days been attacked on the Dunajec by the Austro-Germans and the retreat which they were forced to take up gradually drew back the entire front several hundred kilometers to the east, and in particular led to the evacuation of Galicia.

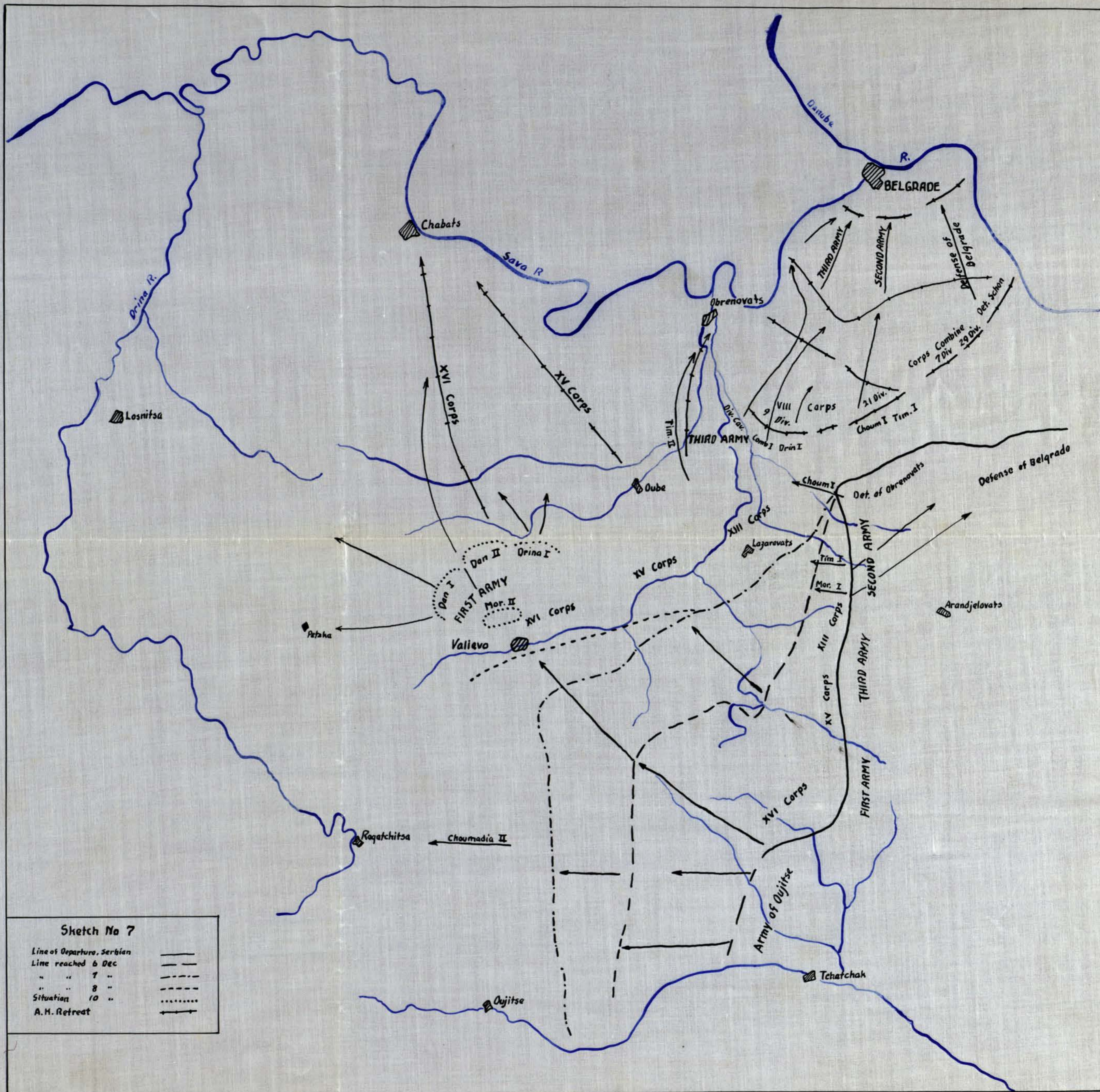
As for the Italians they fell into a hard struggle of trench warfare on their entry into the war and their front on Isonzo was stabilized about 500 kilometers from the northwest salient in Serbia.

So, the Serbian victories which we have just covered constituted only the glorious prolog of a terrible drama which was unfolded early in the autumn of 1915. This was the converging attack of Austria, Germany, and Bulgaria; the retreat of the Serbian troops toward the Adriatic Coast, their rapid reorganization at Corfou; their reappearance in the east on the ranks of the allied armies at Salonica and the long anguish of this people whose soil was entirely in the hands of the enemy.

And it was only in November 1918 - four years after the battle of the Koloubara - that this drama drew to a proper ending, with the return of the armies of King Peter to their reconstituted country.



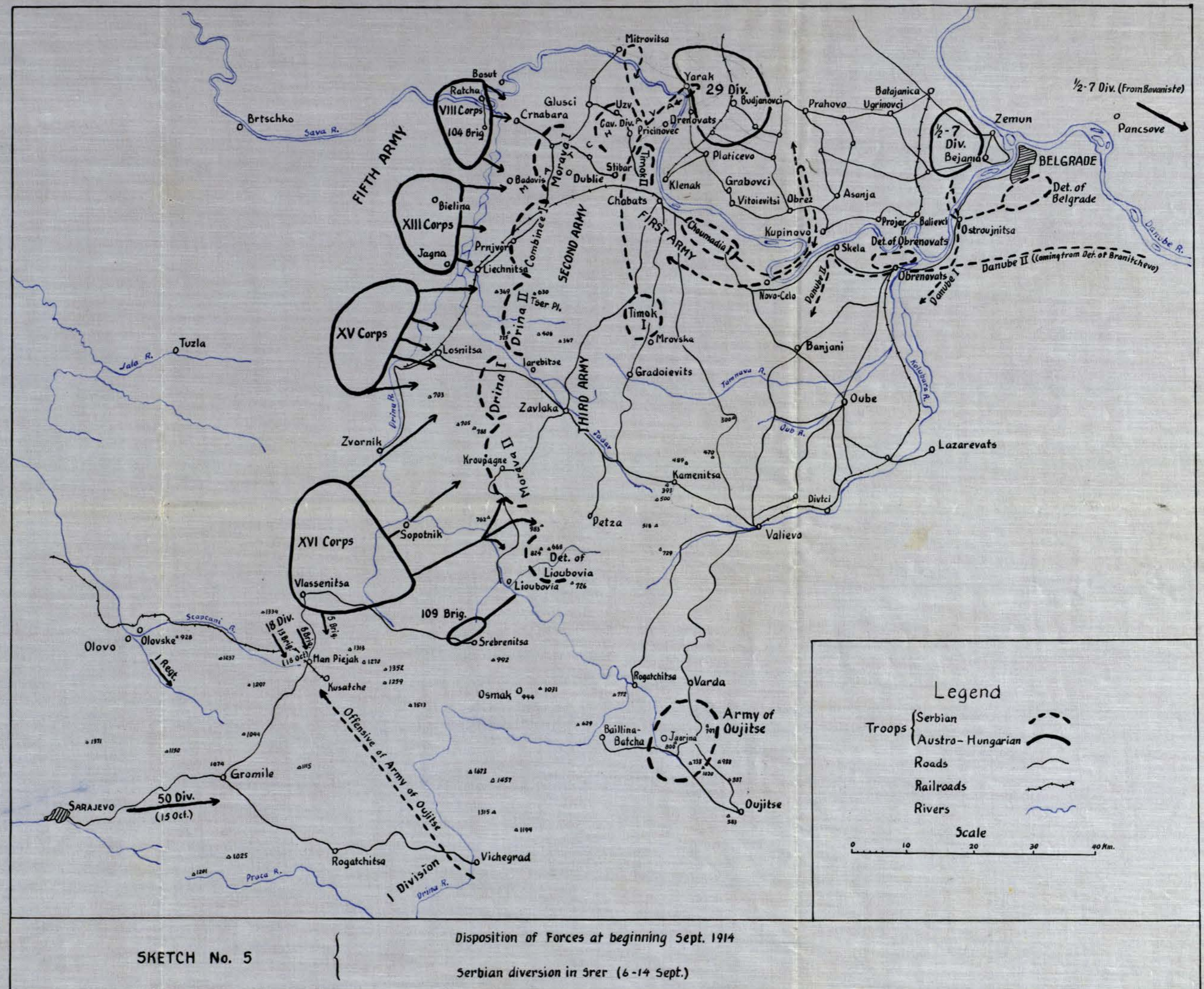
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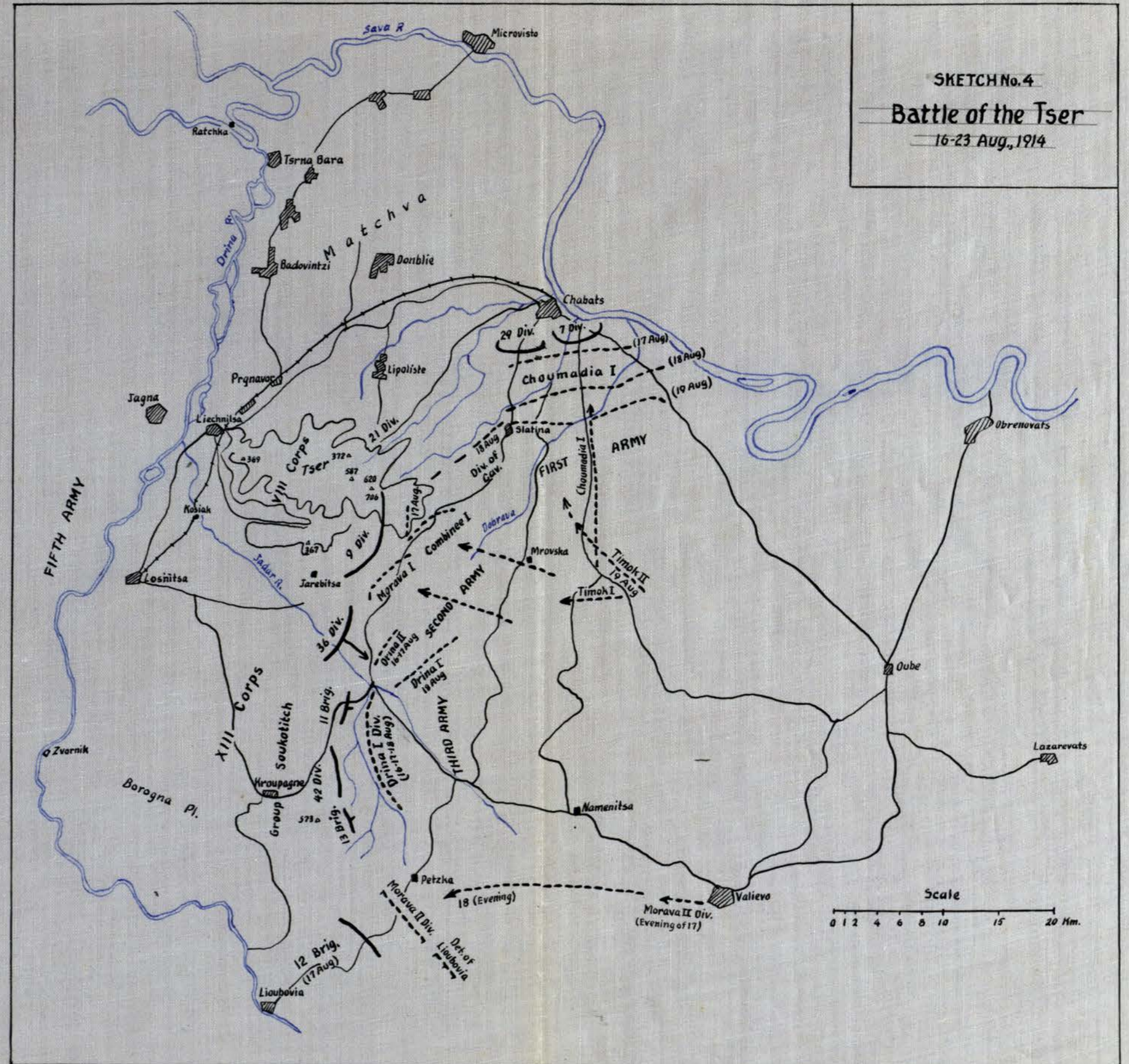
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SKETCH No. 4
 Battle of the Tser
 16-23 Aug., 1914



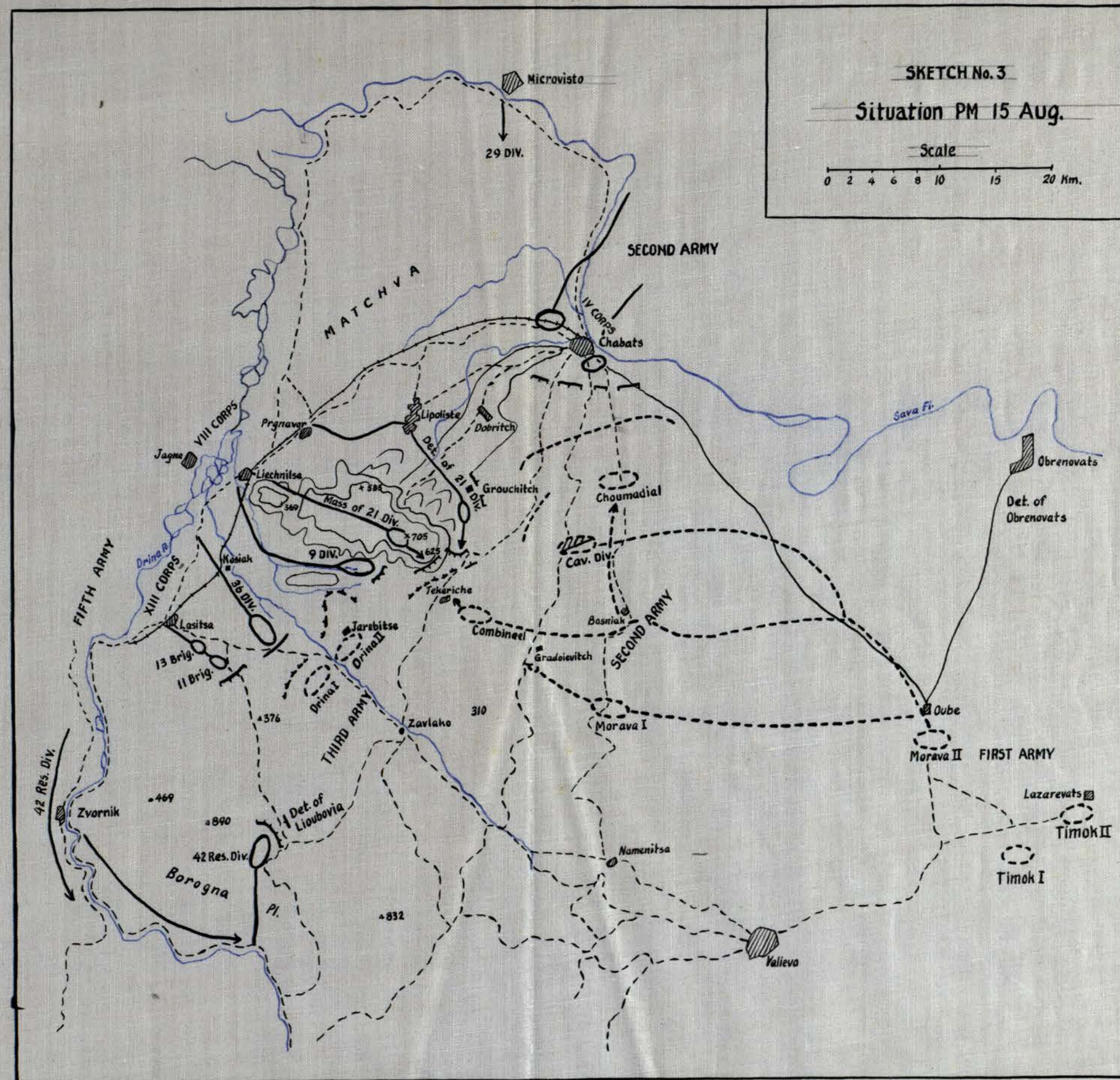
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SKETCH No. 3

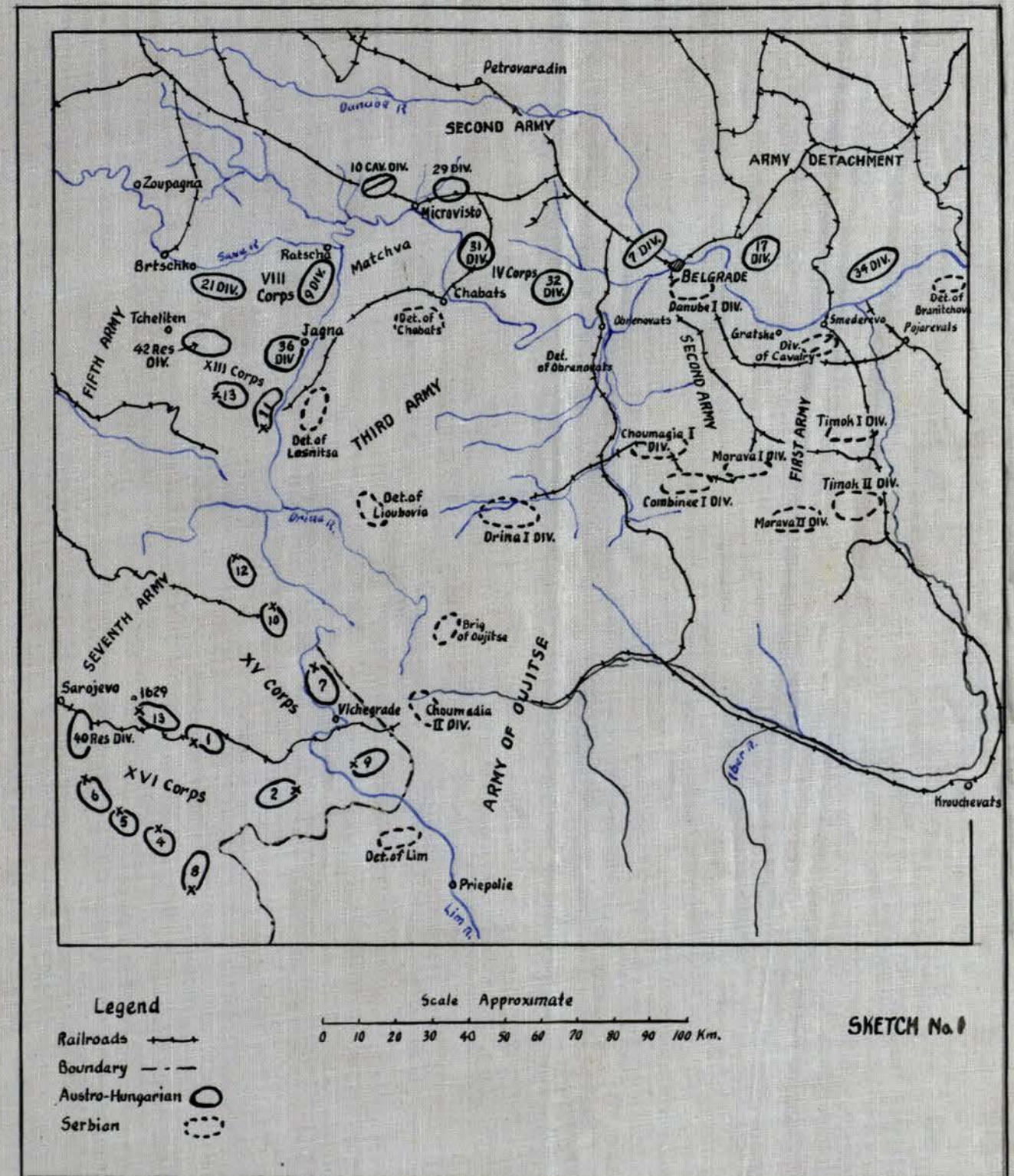
Situation PM 15 Aug.

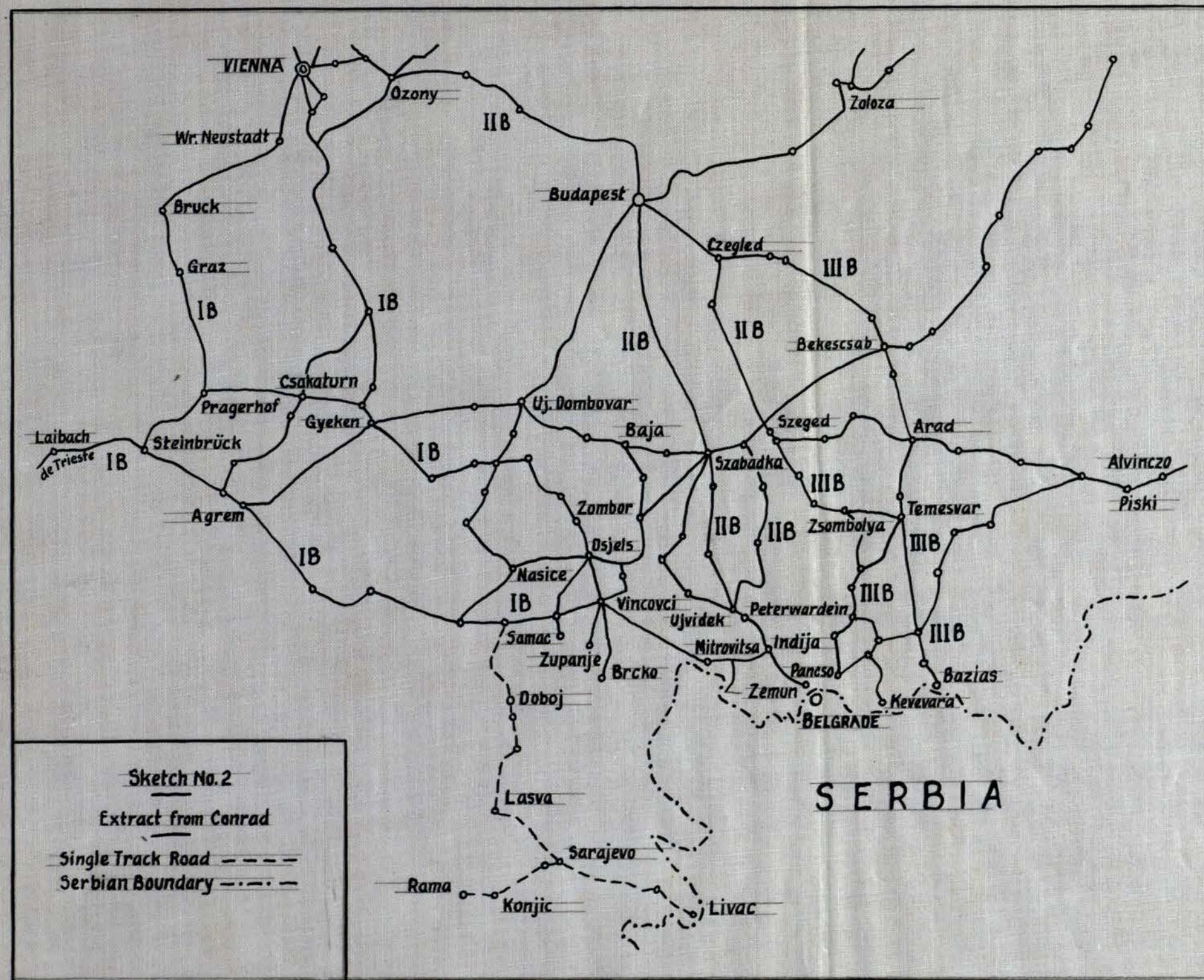
Scale

0 2 4 6 8 10 15 20 Km.



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